

THE STUDENT WORLD

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EDITORIAL

In Action for the Church

The Christian students of Asia have gone into action for the Church. Every day they meet those powerful forces of scientific humanism and marxism which are gripping the minds of their contemporaries. While Islam strengthens its hold in the Arab world and Pakistan, and Hinduism would still seem to be a religious alternative to Christianity in India, the old gods are silent in the universities of China and Japan, and the "other gods" which Hwang Pei-Yung describes are the creatures of our modern era. Christianity is up against new foes in the Far East and the ancient modes of thought provide only the mise en scène.

The first three articles of this issue were given as addresses at the Asian Leaders' Conference of the Federation, held at Kandy over Christmas and New Year. They show a remarkable awareness of the front line position of the universities in the warfare of the Church. As always in Asia, the struggles of the student world precede the revolutions of the nations. And so in the realm of faith a stand made, or ground gained, amongst students is a sign of victory for the Church as a whole. No one could read the article from Burma — even in these days of civil strife — without a deep sense of encouragement. There, perhaps more than anywhere else in Asia, political changes and checks to official Christian influence have led to courageous Christian witness on the part of students themselves.

The fourth article introduces Africa. It has been written by a delegate to the student conference on The Growing

Church held last summer in Holland, at which Africa was most effectively represented. It reminds us that the Church in Africa is no longer being left to develop peacefully in remote villages, but must find its feet in a rapidly changing political and commercial environment. The two final articles were given as addresses at a conference of delegates from Churches in Europe and America held in March under the auspices of the Department of Reconstruction and Inter-Church Aid of the World Council of Churches. (The editor has moved to pastures new!) Neither speaker heard the other give his paper, and therefore it is remarkable that there should be such similarity of approach to the task of the Church in widely separated continents.

And yet we ought not to be surprised when we find such similarity. The secular influences which are moving men today have no national roots, and only a universal Gospel is sufficient to meet them. Here the Federation has proved itself to be a vantage point from which to gain perspective. K. H. Ting and W. A. Visser 't Hooft represent two generations of student leadership, the one speaks from an Asian and the other from a European background, but both are agreed in seeing the task of the Church, not as that of fighting a rearguard action and withdrawing in good order in the hope of some miraculous reversal of worldly fortune, but rather that of establishing a new and vigorous offensive in the world in which it finds itself.

How is the Church to live in the world of today? That is a question which confronts Christians in all the continents. One answer comes from those who think in terms of restoring the Church in all its former glory as the respected heir of Western civilisation, whether as an official institution in Europe, or as a foreign mission in Asia, or Africa. Another answer comes from those who believe that the whole strategy of the Church has to be rethought, away from the forms useful in a capitalist, or even a feudal, world, on to the plans for active existence in a world which is crying out for a convincing and creative alternative to communism. On this issue of strategy the Church must decide, and the Federation must not lag behind.

In The Student World we have been discussing for several years the rise of scientific humanism as an alternative to Christian knowledge, and the rise of communism as an alternative to Christian hope. It is always a good thing to clear one's mind. But in the end the mind, even the student mind, must be cleared for action. In all the continents there are signs of that action beginning, but there is as yet no mighty movement for Christ and His Church in the uncertain student world of today.

Two obligations stand out very clearly in the articles which follow. We are called in the Federation to act for the Church in the universities themselves by drawing men out of isolation into fellowship, out of darkness into light. If students do not rise to this task, no other section of the Church can do it for them. The issue is whether the intellectual world will become a fortress for the Church, or its most subtle and dangerous opponent. But we are also called in the Federation to prepare men for later service in the Church. The two closing articles indicate that there is nothing to choose between Europe and Asia as regards the radical nature of the work to be done. Some would say, for that matter, that the real front is in North America. Yet it should never pass without notice that time and again in these pages it is Asia and Africa that have asked for recruits, because it is there that the ranks are thinnest.

"We dare not take it for granted", writes W. A. Visser 't Hooft, "that Europe has a future". We might add that the futures of all the continents are indissolubly bound up with one another in the providence of God. Europe's loss of faith and direction have had a disastrous effect upon Asia. Yet is it not also true that God has given us again in our generation the Church ecumenical in all the continents to be His instrument for the salvation of the world? God grant that the forthcoming meeting of the General Committee in Canada may be a place where He may speak His Word and send national movements and their members even more strongly into action for the Church in the universities of the world.

R. C. M.

Other Gods in Chinese Universities

HWANG PEI-YUNG

The primary task of evangelism is to proclaim news, the news of what God has done and is doing in human history through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. Since the Gospel is a fact, not an ideal, it is something to be accepted, not to be worked for. That is to say, what the Gospel demands of those who are confronted with it is not primarily to act on certain high principles such as service and sacrifice, but to make decisions to break away with their religious past and to surrender themselves to the eternal redeeming purpose of God.

All of us may agree with the fact that the Christian Gospel has not been very popular among the students in the Asian universities. So far as I can see, one main reason for this is that we have not been able to translate our message into the language, the sentiment, and the categories of the students. We are preaching to a mind that is not a blank or a vacuum, and not only to a person as such, but to a person who thinks according to a certain set of preoccupied categories or presuppositions. Professor Emil Brunner in one of his articles describes this situation with the following example: There is a starving man and there is a good Samaritan, but they do not meet. So it is necessary for us to understand the language of the students so as to render our message intelligible to them.

Though these "other gods", as we call these presuppositions here, always remain rivals to the One God, yet the very fact that other gods are prevalent in the universities also indicates the opportunity for Christian evangelism. One dominant feature in university life today is that all the students feel spiritual hunger. And

spiritual hunger arises from all sorts of frustration caused by political, economic, intellectual and moral confusion. They feel helpless and hopeless as though they were lost in a dark forest. Therefore as soon as they discover an idea, or an ideal, which appears to them to be able to interpret the world and life coherently and rationally, they immediately take hold of it as ardent followers.

The Christian Gospel has not won the confidence of most of the students. It is due to the fact that they think Christianity is firstly intellectually irrational and unable to cope with modern scientific knowledge, and secondly morally irrelevant and impotent to affect essentially the present changing situation. If we really want to fulfil the task of evangelising the students, we should not avoid facing this challenge. On the contrary we should bring all sorts of presuppositions, Christian and secular, into the open and examine each of them carefully in an earnest endeavour to sort out truth from falsehood.

The religion of science

When the students speak of science, they unwittingly use this word with two different meanings. Sometimes they mean by science the scientific achievements such as inventions and discoveries, and sometimes they mean by the same term the scientific method.

In view of the unprecedented development of science during the last two or three hundred years since the industrial revolution, it is apparent that the capacity of man has been greatly increased. This has produced a general belief among the students that man can now use his own intelligence to solve all the problems of human life. Human progress is thus inevitable according to this way of thinking. As science today is still developing to reach wider and wider fields, so the world is getting gradually better and better. The defect in social and economic organisations is only due to the fact that science has not yet developed to its highest

point, and as soon as it does so, all the problems will be remedied completely. So everywhere science is worshipped in the place of God and the scientist is often honoured in a manner "which can only be compared with the superstitious regard which the medieval peasant paid to his priest". What have we Christians to say about this?

First of all, we should point out that the Christian faith does not take sides necessarily with idealism nor necessarily against physical things. Nowhere in the Bible can we find such kind of a teaching. As a matter of fact, the Creation is a creation of both heaven and earth, of the totality of both things spiritual and physical. It was the Gnostic heresy, rather than Christian orthodoxy, that asserted the false teaching that only things spiritual are good and things physical are evil. We Christians take all scientific achievements as the glory of God. All truth, if it is real truth, cannot belong to others than God. The Devil is the father of the liars only. On the other hand, we also have to bear in mind that science is only concerned with how the physical universe works, thus enabling man to increase his power by conforming to the laws of the physical world. But it cannot tell to what purpose the power should be rightly used. The scientific inventions and discoveries have indeed made the world a more comfortable place for men to live in, and made society more advanced and more efficient than they were two or three hundred years ago, but we certainly cannot say this is a better world or better society. This is one thing that science does not and cannot do because purpose does not fall within the category of scientific work.

The reason why man has not been able to use the scientific inventions to their proper purpose is due to the fact that he has not been able to work out the purpose of his life. That is to say, man can be free to use his powers obtained through the scientific instruments for the ends for which they are given only when he really understands his own status in the order of the creation.

Man is a creature made in the image of God. He is free, but he is also limited. On the one hand, he is free to use the potential powers and resources of the nature and put them at his disposal so as to gain mastery of the nature. But in spite of that, he is also limited. He is a creature. He is man but not God. He is dependent upon God for the ultimate meaning and fulfilment of his life.

But as a matter of fact, this original intention in the order of the creation has gone wrong. Man is not willing to remain as a creature. He over-affirms his freedom and denies his creatureliness. He wants to be his own lord, the master of his own destiny.

This fact of denying the sovereignty of God and self-assertion have been accentuated especially in our time, since man feels rather self-satisfied as to his success in scientific achievements. Man feels that he can now do without a supernatural God. Man is the measure of all things. This is the root of all sins, for which a shorter name is pride. And pride makes a person only regard himself as the end, and all his neighbours only means to that end. In other words, pride sees no personality in other people and also forgets that he himself is a personality. Consequently, while he is using the scientific inventions for his own interest, he gradually becomes the slave instead of the master of the scientific instruments. And the better the instrument, the worse the consequences. All that has happened to us in the world which has so horrified us can be explained in this light. But so long as man remains denying the sovereignty of God, there will hardly be any choice for man not to use his inventions for self-gained purpose. The proper purpose to which the scientific inventions should be used can only be safeguarded by a conscious dependence upon God and self-denial. Only when he willingly submits himself to be the slave of God, can he be truly free, and only then is he truly able to use the scientific inventions for the glory of God and the furtherance of peace and human welfare.

Scientific method

The second meaning of the term science when the students speak of it is "scientific method". The fundamental meaning of it is that through experiment, measurement, and verification, man can reach a rational understanding of the world and its purpose thus enabling man to obtain a complete mastery over the physical universe. Therefore, anything that cannot be tested by experiment, measurement and verification is false. Supernatural elements, as expressed in miracles, resurrection, etc., within the Christian faith, cannot stand these tests, therefore they are false and should be excluded in order that Christianity may become more intelligent and intelligible. We Christians do believe that human reason is also a part of God's creation. Just as Christians do not have specifically Christian ways of cooking and dressing, so we do not have specifically Christian ways of logical thinking. As a matter of fact, we are all, more or less, consciously or unconsciously, following the scientific method in our everyday thinking. But what we have to say is this : in general, people do not realise the fact that human reason can become fruitful and capable of reaching a reliable view of the universe only when it is guided by a certain faith-principle. They tend to believe that reason is the unconditioned principle of unity and coherence, and that the scientific method is the only valid path to objective truth. Reason is not concerned with faith. As soon as one begins to project any faith-principle into scientific work, objective truth stops and disinterested research is rendered impossible. Actually, that is hardly true to fact. There is no objective truth as such. All understandable truth is interpreted truth. It is not humanly possible to exclude the faith-principle when one is selecting, classifying, and interpreting the data that one has collected. There must be a certain principle by which one is guided into the selection, classification, and interpretation of the data,

and this principle is not derived from the data themselves. The principle may, or may not, be consciously present to the minds of the scientific workers, but the fact is that everyone of them is following one or the other kind of principle. Faith always precedes reason. In other words, reason must be illumined or revealed before it can properly work.

Thus, the Christians accept the biblical faith-principle as developed by the prophets and apostles to be the basic guiding principle of understanding. But this does not mean the Christians are using faith as a substitute for reason. Faith does not supply the data, and the Christians have also to use the function of science for searching and examining the data. Faith, however, does supply the category of interpretation by which the data of science can be rightly understood. It is wrong for Christians to say that they believe in creation, and therefore can discard the theory of evolution. Creation is not a substitute for evolution, but rather a light in which the theory of evolution can be rightly understood. The Christian doctrine of Creation, Fall and Redemption are not theories which could be used to take the place of biology, psychology, or political science, but rather a clue or category for understanding these sciences. There can be no conflict between science and religion, for faith is there to guide reason, not to oppose reason.

One more word about this. Just as we Christians believe that human reason is a part of God's creation, so we believe that reason is also subject to the "fallen" condition of the human creation, and needs to be redeemed. Wrong use of reason arises not only from man's ignorance and finitude, but also from the distortions brought about by human sinfulness and self-centredness. Even the worst evil doers can give the reason for their conduct in a most logical way. The right use of reason is thus a virtue, but like every other virtue, it is the gift of God. Reason not only needs faith to make it possible to function, but also needs faith to enable itself to be rightly used.

The religion of politics

I think everybody here realises the fact that the students in the Asian universities are particularly sensitive to social, political, and international problems. In China, it is always the students who first realise the existence of social evils, and crises, and take the lead in seeking ways and means to remedy them. They believe that political and social injustice is the basic problem of human life, and all other problems are just fruits which have their common root in social injustice. Therefore, as soon as a new social and political order is achieved, all kinds of problems will be solved sooner or later.

As Christians, we should keep reminding ourselves that because we are social beings, we are inevitably involved in all the political and social issues in exactly the same manner as our unbelieving neighbours. To become a Christian does not deliver us from the obligation and responsibility of being a citizen, or a member of society. We have to face the fact of social and political injustice, and accept the scientific-sociological explanations of the cause and remedy of it. To be indifferent to the responsibility of justice is in fact to align ourselves with injustice and tyranny. Inaction is a kind of action.

But, nevertheless, politics is only the first mile for us Christians. We still have a second mile to go. Politics is necessary, but it has to be given its due place. In our era of extreme political confusion and uncertainty, nearly all countries, especially in Asia, are engaging in struggle for democracy and national independence, and it is only natural that most people, especially young people, are inclined to put all their trust and hope in political theories and practices. Everything will be O.K. after the old and corrupted order is done away with. All problems will be solved and human ideals will be close to perfect realisation in the new order. Some even go so far as to believe that the Kingdom of God will be thus brought about on earth through political and

economic reconstruction. It is here that politics becomes a religion, an attitude and a belief which we Christians should squarely face.

According to the Bible, politics or the state is "the ordinance of God", the aim of which is to deliver man from the worst consequences of human sin. Economic exploitation, political domination, and race prejudice, etc., are all the consequences of sin, but not sin itself. As a matter of fact, sin arises in man's willed rebellion against God. The consequences of sin can be checked and prevented by political practices, but sin itself can never be remedied by ourselves because it involves the re-adjustment of our relationship with God. Since all of us have chosen to be self-centered, that is, to be our own lords, and are not willing to submit ourselves to the sovereignty of God, we cannot by our own effort be delivered from sin. It is only through the saving grace of God that we can be reconciled with God. Politics by its nature can only make the world a more reasonable place than it is now, but cannot redeem human nature. So long as human sin exists, we have to anticipate some sort of evils in any political and social set-up. So many young people have been hopelessly disillusioned in facing the post-war political situation simply because they do not recognise this fundamental fact.

Since politics does not take sin seriously enough, all political theories are built on the basic assumption that human nature is fundamentally good and human progress and perfection are inevitable. It is in here that communism has got a far more advanced view than the bourgeois *laissez faire* theory. Marxist communism recognises the fact that human behaviour, intellectual, emotional and moral, is often deeply affected and distorted by man's self-interest. Yet it sees human selfishness only in the light of economic relationships. Since the proletariat, or the "people" are the majority group and "have nothing to lose but their chains", they are free from self-interest and can be entrusted with power, as they are immune to corruption.

Taking sin seriously

As we have said before, we have to accept the scientific-sociological interpretation of the causes of human evils and the remedy of them, but we cannot believe that they can explain the whole of the human tragedy. Human nature has its height and depth that scientific sociology does not know, that is, man is not only a biological and social being, he is also a person related to a reality beyond the physical world and society. He is a person made in God's image and responsible to Him. Human nature has gone astray fundamentally because it separates itself from God. An unjust economic and social system does give rise to certain vices and evils, but it is a consequence rather than a cause of human sin. Sins and ambiguities are characteristic of all human existence, no one person or class is free from them. Only by divine grace can man's sins be forgiven, and only through faith in Christ can man get God's grace.

The political and economic organisations are made for men, not men for them. But, as a matter of fact, nations and political parties always demand from their subjects and members an exclusive and unqualified loyalty and obedience, and make them means for political or economic ends. As we have said before, political organisations or states are the "ordinance of God", therefore they are responsible to God. They cannot be regarded as the ultimate measure and reality of human life. Only in so far as they are regarded as being always under the judgment of God, who is the One Lord of all aspects of human life, is there a guarantee against dictatorial tyranny. That is to say, only the Kingdom of God and His righteousness have the right of demanding absolute allegiance because only God is the perfect union of power and love which no human institution has achieved. Politics is an ordinance in so far as it faces certain forms of injustice, but it cannot guarantee that there will not be any new form of injustice in the new order. All forms of human institutions are to be

judged and measured under the perfect union of power and love in the Kingdom of God. Therefore, while we are fighting for social and political justice, we have to fight in penitence, constantly reminding ourselves that both the new and the old orders are under the judgment of God's absolute demand of love, no human institution is ever, or can be, perfect.

The Kingdom of God should never be identified with any human order. As a matter of fact the Kingdom of God has already come and has already broken through victoriously in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By means of repentance and obedience, man can enter or receive it now. And the completion of the Kingdom of God is in the future, at the end of history and beyond history. Both "already come" and "beyond history" are over and beyond human effort. It is exclusively the work of God. Only when we understand this biblical realism of the Kingdom of God as a dynamic living reality at the same time present and in the future can we avoid falling into the trap of either escapism or utopianism.

On the one hand, we know the limits and inadequacies of every form of human justice, therefore we do not indulge in the vain-glorious belief that we can create the Kingdom of God by our own virtue; but on the other hand, we also know that we are workers together with God, therefore we must not regard the judgment and the mercy of God as a way of escape, we must explore with every effort the possibility of social and political justice, and fight for it.

The religion of the self

By the religion of the self, I mean the conceptions and attitudes of those people who are indifferent to all sorts of belief, secular or spiritual, and are interested only in pursuing their own pleasures, interests and gains. They are concerned with their own rice bowl, with getting a good job with a high salary. They see no hope

in the world, nor do they trust any person besides themselves, and set out to secure what they can from the wreckage for themselves. To them, the only measure of life is material gain, physical enjoyment, and present pleasure. Spiritually, they are nihilists, in social relationships they are cynics, and personally they are utilitarians.

There are at least three reasons which accentuate this kind of philosophy of life in our time : 1) Material temptation is greater now than ever before. And the "free competition" theory which is inherent in our university education intensifies the desire for personal gain at the expense of others. Those who may have done a great deal of evil are rewarded with riches and high positions in society, whereas those who honestly toil for the common good of the people remain in poverty and from bad to worse. Thus, wealth and position are worshipped and ideals and religion are despised and ridiculed ; 2) Political and economic up-and-downs are more acute now than ever before. In time of changes, people tend to care for their personal security more than ever. Religious faith and even a scientific or intellectual career cannot save them and their families from suffering and loss. Everybody is minding his own business, so you have to mind your own too exclusively ; 3) Demoralisation is another reason for this philosophy of life. All institutions are morally impotent. Even such organisations as the United Nations and the Christian churches on which some people have been placing great hope and trust are also disappointing. Accordingly, young people lose all hope and find no meaning in human life. Then the best thing to do is to eat, drink and make merry until the last breath.

First of all, we have to guard against the danger of giving these people the wrong impression that religion is a means for obtaining material wealth. Some preachers wrongly interpret Jesus' teaching, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all that will be yours over and above", asserting that if we pray

God will give us everything we want. It might be good to pray such prayers, but fulfilment of personal desires cannot be made the motive for believing in God. It is using and tempting God rather than believing in and obeying God.

People with this attitude have to be told that God is the ground and the fulfilment of human existence. Human life, though in this world, is also related to a higher world. The meaning of life and the way of living can only be found in God and our relationships with God and others. Material things are means for maintenance of life in order that we may live a meaningful life, but they are not in themselves the source and the content of life's meaning. Personal security cannot be obtained apart from the security of society as a whole. Living in a world like ours, we have a two-fold duty. That is, to fight for the betterment of social and political realities and the establishment of a more reasonable relationship between man and man, to be humble before God, in penitence, always seeking forgiveness and redemption. The Chinese S.C.M. has recently agreed on a slogan called "Reconstruct the Self and Change the *Status Quo*". This slogan is meant to indicate the Christian understanding of the meaning and way of human existence.

Direct and verbal approach to these people is often not effective enough. Both the staff and student members of the Chinese S.C.M. can bear witness to the fact that practical participation in service programme has proved to be the most effective one for them. Through actual experience, they will gradually come to discover for themselves where true meaning of life lies. Let me mention one example only. Last Christmas, the Shanghai unit of our S.C.M. initiated to lead a campaign called the "Love your Neighbour Movement". Hundreds of students participated in collecting and distributing winter clothes for the war refugees. After they came back from visiting the refugee quarters, having acquainted themselves for the first time with the miserable living conditions

of the poor people, many students gave the following witness. "I used to think I was the most miserable and helpless fellow in the world. But after I have seen these poor people, I realise now that I am not the one who is in desperate need, I am actually in the better-off group. It is they, whom I saw a moment ago, who really need help, and I feel it to be my obligation and privilege to give them help." This is a very good beginning for becoming Christians, and a wonderful opportunity for evangelism. With this spirit, they can easily be led a step further to the acceptance of the power of God in relation to a meaning and a way of life.

The religion of moral idealism

According to my personal experience, there are not many students in the Chinese universities who really believe in moral idealism. It is believed to be too slow a process to cope with the present rapidly changing situation. However, we can still find moral idealists in educational and church circles. There are professors and church leaders who ascribe the world chaos to moral ignorance which could be remedied through educational processes. Only by emphasising moral education can man gradually learn to build up stronger character and with the good people thus educated as the constituent members of the world community, the world will automatically grow better and better. In the past generation, some of the Chinese educationalists invented a slogan called "personality education", and we had a hymn entitled "Personality saves China". Although the present generation is familiar with neither the slogan nor the hymn, which I have not heard people sing since the Sino-Japanese war, yet their influence still lingers on among the older generation.

Let me quote in English translation one paragraph of an article, which recently appeared in one of the Chinese newspapers. It gave a good summary of what the "out-of-date" moral idealists are thinking.

“The constituent units of society are individuals, so when the constituents are good, society will be good, but if the majority of the members are bad, society will naturally be bad. If we want to improve society, we have to improve every individual first. The effectiveness of the improvement depends on the extent to which a man or a woman can control his, or her, personality. National reconstruction must be built upon such a basis that every citizen has got hold of high moral ideals and healthy attitudes towards life. Unless we have lost our confidence in education, we must realise that education has the power to train man’s will, intellect, and character. Through proper education, human will will become as strong as steel, human intellect as clear as a mirror, and personality and moral character will be esteemed above other values. With a strong will, an unconditioned intellect, and an attractive personality and character, man can at least keep himself from falling into the abyss of the dark evils of society. If this is to be carried on for two generations, when the old and corrupted generation has died out, the whole society will be filled with nothing but new and good people.”

This summary sounds so naïve that I think few people would really take it seriously. But for those of us who are especially concerned with the task of evangelism, this is a problem which we shall have to come across from time to time.

The question is often raised in our student study groups that religious faith is solely, or mainly, for the purpose of encouraging people to behave well. That is to say, religion, just like education, is something to make people act upon certain moral principles, to be a good husband or wife, a good citizen, and above all a good human being. Christianity is a religion that demands a higher standard of moral ideals than other religious standards which are recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. To believe in a certain religion is to get acquainted with a particular form of moral principles so that you can act upon them. Therefore, all religions are actually

the same, everybody can choose what he thinks to be the best, and act accordingly.

The first thing we Christians have to say in regard to this question is this : Morality is concerned with "what we ought to do and to be", while Christian faith is concerned with "what is". Moral ideals obtain their meaning only in faith. It is by faith that we are justified, not by act. Therefore, the whole viewpoint of the moral idealists is wrong. Religion does not exist for morality, but is itself the source and fulfilment of morality.

Moral idealists say that man can act upon moral principles as soon as he knows them. This is taking for granted that human nature is fundamentally good and capable of doing good. However, this assertion is not true, as we have seen before. It is not due to man's ignorance that evils come to exist, but rather to man's unwillingness to obey God. Therefore Christian faith emphasises the necessity for man to seek forgiveness of sins and receive power before he can possibly act upon the Law of the Holy Spirit that brings life. The meaning of the Sermon on the Mount is not a series of spiritual commands which one has to obey before one can come into the Kingdom. Rather, it is a description of life lived under the rule of God. It is not a law, but a promise to those who accept the Kingdom. In other words, moral conduct is the consequence rather than the condition of being a Christian.

The University Christian Community in Japan

KYOKO TAKEDA

The university is a vital cross section of society within which the S.C.M. must demonstrate its purpose and make its Christian witness. Because the university reflects the characteristics of the total social order of which it is a part, I necessarily must refer to the university as we know it in Japan. After having indicated some of the problems which are integral to the university in Japan I will show the relevance of my analysis to our general theme.

Higher education holds a place of prominence in Japan both as a cultural force and within the educational system. There are twenty-two government or state universities, twenty-four private and thirteen church universities, enrolling a total of more than ninety thousand students. The university teachers total over six thousand. If we include the professional colleges the number of students is four hundred thousand.

The thinking in universities

What is the attitude of this mass of academic persons towards religion? Generally speaking, faculty and students alike neglect or reject all religion. The university in Japan, as in most other lands today, approaches truth from the standpoint of materialistic, secularised science. Buddhism and religious Shinto have lost prestige throughout the nation, and particularly in the university. Confucianism, which in the past infused the whole of Japanese culture with a moralistic character has, particularly since the war ended, lost its strength. In my

experience as a student secretary I have witnessed the collapse of capitalist liberalism and imperialistic militarism. The international financial crisis in the early thirties precipitated Japan's rejection of liberalism; military defeat has now deflated the wartime feudalism which characterised our thought for a decade. Most dominant among the ideologies filling the intellectual vacuum is marxism, even as was the case in the early twenties and early thirties, with this difference that today our national and personal survival is at stake, whereas fifteen years ago student interest in marxism was dilettante. True, thousands of students were arrested during the thirties for alleged and real communist activities, but national crisis and police pressure succeeded in excluding marxism from the universities. Our present-day marxism combines materialism with humanistic socialism. At the Japan-American student conference held recently in Tokyo, the Americans expressed surprise at the extent to which the Japanese have accepted the presuppositions of socialism, and are willing to accept it as the basis for the national economy.

While nihilism is, next to marxism, the second most dominant ideology among Japanese students, its influence is by definition negative. Socialistic humanism therefore we must accord second place among the positive forces competing for the loyalty of Japanese students. Idealistic humanism in Japan closely resembles the liberalism which capitulated in the face of Japan's militarisation programme in the thirties, and to that extent is weak. Its strength is in part due to America's military position in our national life. Japan, even as many other nations represented in this conference, is a country caught between Russia and the U.S.A., and is thus subject to the policies and pressures of these two powers competing for world mastery. The most serious question which confronts Christians in the university is the development of a dynamic Christian *rationale* with respect to the secular ideologies which determine the character of their world.

Tensions and struggles

These competing ideologies have found expression within the student body of the university. The National Student Self-Government Federation (*Zenkoku Gakusei Jichikai Remmei*) is the most powerful of the several movements to be found in the colleges and universities. It has branches in the Christian, as well as in the private and government schools. Yet its leadership is predominantly communist and radical left-wing. Since the spring of 1948 the Federation has called a number of strikes and organised demonstrations against the so-called "undemocratic" educational policies of the government as well as against the colonisation of Japan under the American occupation.

Admitting the undemocratic nature of this student movement and the indifference of more than half the students to such issues, the very programme of the Federation of Student Self-Government is helping to awaken in the mass of students a badly needed sense of social responsibility. While some of the Christians will enter into no relations with the Federation, other members of the S.C.M. have joined, both to promote the constructive programme in which the Student Federation is engaged, and also that they might work from within the movement in an effort to keep it operating along proper lines.

These two tendencies, towards marxism and towards socialistic humanism should not blind us to the fact that the mass of students are either nihilistic, or indifferent. To the extent that they accepted the idealistic propaganda produced by the wartime government, then to that extent are they wary of idealism. Both in terms of numbers and potential influence these agnostics constitute the greatest challenge to be found within the university. It was the existence of a large group of such persons in Germany which contributed greatly to the rise of Hitler and National Socialism.

An interesting and significant innovation is attributable to the war: it is that the students have joined the labouring class. Prior to the war students either came from privileged homes, or their education was financed by extraordinary sacrifices of parents and members of the family. Inflation today means that all but the children of the newly rich must work. Approximately 90 % of the students need to supplement the meagre sums they receive from home. Yet such are the difficulties of finding employment open to students that not more than one half of them are able to find work. Those who do find employment as tutors, or as workers in factories, stores and offices not only achieve a measure of independence, they also come to understand the problems of society through first-hand experience. Long an ivory tower, the university is now becoming an arena within which the problems of society are worked through both ideologically and practically. This change in the basic character of the university has great significance for the future of Japan.

Parenthetically we need to realise that necessity and opportunity have turned many students into black marketeers. The widespread demoralisation of youth can thus be found in the nation's university cross section. A Japanese equivalent of the German *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* which arranges employment for students, a programme of vocational training, and more adequate provision for thought leadership are required, if we are to combat effectively this demoralising tendency within the university.

Without presuming to have analysed the university exhaustively, the illustrations I have given at least evidence the travail of the nation and the university. It is at the point of these tensions and struggles that the S.C.M. as a Christian community within the university community must make its witness and demonstrate its purposes.

The theology of the church

Before pursuing further our discussion of the S.C.M. within the university we must examine the Church as it exists in the nation in question, because the S.C.M. as a child of the Church exists on the campus as a witness to the same Christian faith and serves as an arm of the Church.

When we examine the Church in my country we find a nation-wide institution with three hundred thousand members, carrying greater prestige than the numerical membership might indicate. But we must admit that the Church is weak, both in terms of leadership and dynamic. The theology of Barth and Brunner have conditioned it theologically despite the predominance of American leadership and the high proportion of American-trained ministers. According to Barth as understood in Japan, culture is the product of sin ; thus Christians have no responsibility for the social order, for politics is but the sinful process whereby a sinful world governs itself. The transcendental God whom the Church worships, being above the mundane processes of history, does not demand that Christians be concerned with social problems or the amelioration of human need. Its preoccupation with dialectical theology results in Japanese translations of Barth's books appearing before American or British translations appear ; but it does not go beyond the personal faith of the individual, his sin and salvation, to the salvation of society. Personal morality and individualistic ethics are emphasised, particularly certain external evidences of morality such as chastity, temperance and non-smoking ; yet rarely are the issues of social ethics raised. This important omission in effect emasculates the Church of its power within the community ; instead of being a revolutionary force for righteousness, it in practice blesses the social status quo.

Not only does the Church in Japan have no solution for the university problems mentioned above ; it is hardly aware of their existence. It is stark tragedy that

the Church with its absolute and ultimate answers either does not know how, or feels no impulse to participate in the historical process. It never gets beyond its theological discussion of Christ crucified to face the tragedy of contemporary history within which Christians individually and collectively are called upon to take up their cross. This discrepancy between theory and practice explains why idealistic youth, made aware of the responsibility which humans bear for the condition of society, turn to communism rather than to the Church as a channel for their creative energies.

The responsibility of the S.C.M. in such a situation is obvious. As an arm of the Church in the university it is called upon to witness to the Christian faith. Aware of the challenge which the secular world, as epitomised in the university, presents to the Church, the S.C.M. must rouse the Church to accept its historical mission within contemporary society.

The S.C.M. as mediator between Church and university

The S.C.M. as the "arm" of the Church within the university is a lay movement of faculty and students integral to the total life and activity of the university. Immanent within the university, and partaking of its nature, the Christian members nevertheless have the special responsibility of witnessing to the faith of the Church in the language and culture patterns familiar to the university community. Lacking the S.C.M. the university could not understand the truth which the Church incarnates and preaches; lacking the S.C.M. the Church would continue oblivious to the challenge of the university. Thus Christians within the university may be conceived as lay missionaries to their fellows, like them in every point except with relation to their acceptance of the Christian faith and a responsibility for being living witnesses to it. In this sense the S.C.M. is a mediator between the Church and the university. The manner in which Christians face the problems of the university

constitutes their Christian witness. Not through words alone, but through their life and thoughts as well, they can make the Christian influence felt on the campus. Regardless of which groups bears the name, the S.C.M. consists of those lay Christians who accept their responsibilities. They constitute the channel whereby the meaning of the Gospel can come to the university, and the members of the university be brought within the Church. If this is to be effected, there are certain conditions.

The Christian Church must develop and articulate a constructive approach to the social sciences. In the Middle Ages the Church set back progress and did itself irreparable damage by identifying the Gospel with an anachronistic Copernican conception of the physical universe. The Church can make the same mistake in this generation vis-à-vis the social sciences by identifying the Kingdom of God with pre-marxian sociology. But the Church must go beyond negatively blessing advances in the field of social sciences ; it must also nurture and develop the social scientists who by making the discoveries push back the frontiers of human relations and reduce the sociological lag which characterises our modern world. As the historian Toynbee has aptly phrased it, "Christianity does not create the civilisation of tomorrow ; it can create the creators of tomorrow's civilisation".

We have an excellent illustration of this kind of social scientist in Professor Otsuka who is on the faculty of Japan's number one institution of higher learning, Tokyo University. Professor Otsuka is a sincere and profound Christian, a nationally known scientist and an economist whose economic presuppositions are patently marxian. The intellectual and spiritual struggles whereby he sought to rationalise his marxian concepts and Christian convictions have given him an almost unique authority among the students of the university who have faced a similar problem. His prestige extends not alone to the Christian members of the university, but to the

mass of non-Christians as well. Through the study of his books and by taking his courses many Christians have been awakened to the significance of social science, and particularly to the truth to be found in Marx ; and non-Christians, having approached Professor Otsuka because of their respect for his scholarship and interpretations of marxism, have been impressed by his Christian personality and faith, which has led in many instances to their coming to a proper understanding of Christianity.

The Christian doctrine of man is a concept which materialistic physical science and secularised social science could not of themselves develop. Christian scientists dare not compromise it in their efforts to gain academic status or because of the alleged or real demands of their sciences. Christianity alone portrays man in his freedom and sin and reveals how he may utilise his freedom and be redeemed from sin. In Christ alone can human history gain significance and find its fulfilment. Thus we in the university community must be at the same time thorough scientists, productive and creative, and also Christians who interpret the ultimate and absolute meaning of life in terms of Christian presuppositions.

At this point we need to emphasise the importance of Christian professors on the campus. They profoundly influence their students through daily class-room contacts, by the formal and informal statements they make and by the prejudices and convictions they reveal. Thus it is important that there be Christians on the faculty, and that they be upheld by the S.C.M. in their witness to the Christian faith and life.

The S.C.M. in Japan has undertaken to organise the faculty group. They attend our student conferences as leaders and observers. They serve as advisers and voluntary leaders of the local fellowships and associations. As they share in our activities they come to understand our purposes, and thus contribute to our effort within the university. It is our experience that

the integration of Christian faculty members into the S.C.M. is a means of extending Christian influence into the life of the university.

Faith in action

It is also our experience that the S.C.M. must express its faith in action, that words without deeds are meaningless. This philosophy means in practice that we are inevitably drawn into relations with other student organisations which profess a devotion to the same social ideals. Specifically this means entering into relations with communist student groups. We are confronted today with a situation which has many points in common with the challenge of the late twenties and early thirties, when communists enjoyed a period of popularity in Japan. Many S.C.M. members through their idealism were led to identify themselves with the communist cause, so much so that for a period these persons controlled the S.C.M. The consequent purge and reaction within the S.C.M. resulted in our losing many members who never returned. Other members who remained within the S.C.M. so suffered during this tragic experience that they are now hesitant to sanction student participation in social activities and political discussions.

It is my conviction however that despite the dangers of involvement and compromise, the S.C.M. must identify itself with the struggle for justice both within the university and within the community. Only as S.C.M. members function individually and collectively in relation to the tensions and struggles where history is being made can they fulfil their responsibilities to God and to their fellows.

This concern, both for the world and to make the Christian witness relevant to the particular tensions of a particular time and place, should not blind the S.C.M. and its members to the fact that, unless the S.C.M. is concerned first and foremost with the obedience and loyalty of the individual to God, it cannot serve as the

instrument of God in the university. While necessarily participating in campus and community social activities these activities and social goals cannot be identified with the ultimate and absolute. The Christian answer always transcends the relativities of history. While the programme of the S.C.M. is an expression of the Christian faith, and represents the efforts of the members individually and collectively to express their concern in relation to the demands of history at a particular time, it can never be the final answer, because it is corrupted by the sinfulness of human nature. Thus the S.C.M. as all other Christian groups, must recognise the paradox of social responsibility on the one hand, and the impossibility of completely fulfilling the responsibility on the other. This paradox of obligation and impossibility is stated by St. Paul in his first letter to the Church at Corinth : "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God..." (I Cor. 1 : 17-24.)

Only as the S.C.M. demonstrates this faith collectively and individually can the academic and social activities be used by God as a means of giving witness to the Gospel. And only as the S.C.M. expresses this faith within its programme can the university understand the Christian Gospel.

Thus the S.C.M. as a university Christian movement is an evangelical group incarnating and giving living witness to the Gospel within the university, partaking of its sinfulness and corrupted by its inadequacies, and by this very fact serving as the leaven by which alone its nature can be changed and its ultimate purpose be achieved. The S.C.M. finds its purpose and lives its life at the point of tension created by this paradox of its functions.

Living the Gospel in Burma

KO KIAW THAN

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” (John 1 : 1, 14.)

Only very recently the meaning of the first portion of the fourteenth verse has been brought to me anew : “The Word was made flesh.” The principle of incarnation or the Word being presented in the form of flesh is the very principle that we must give our thoughts to, in this age, anew.

Many of us have felt that the Gospel is something which is separate from our daily lives. But to turn that Gospel into flesh, or to identify our lives with the Word of God has very seldom occupied our minds. When I think of living and interpreting the Gospel, I have been stimulated to find out what the Gospel presents. Three thoughts came to my mind connected with faith, love and hope.

The true meaning of faith

By faith we do not merely mean “the intellectual acceptance” of facts presented ; faith involves a commitment of the entire self on the part of the believer. We are told of the redeeming love of God and how, by having faith in Christ’s redemption on the Cross, we are saved. The Gospel tells us not only of the crucifixion of Christ, but also of His resurrection ; and even further than that, the Gospel tells us about the coming of the Holy Spirit,

the Helper. Man cannot by his own works attain perfection and God intervenes to show us the way. The content of the Gospel is this good news.

As told in the twenty-fourth verse of the fifth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, we have passed from death unto life — and that, not because of our choice, but because of God's care we are assured of salvation. In John 10 : 28-29 we are told : "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Then again "My Father which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand". We are safely in Jesus' hands, or God's hands, and all the time we are committed to the care of the divine there is no possibility of getting lost. It is really good news to realize that our safety is not due to the supposed bulwarks that we try to raise for ourselves, but due to the shelter that God gives to a committed soul.

But we who believe the Gospel and look forward to the perfection of the taste of eternal life that we have here now — how shall we present it to other students who do not know Christ ? There is the great Olivet message when Christ declared : "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." But along with this great message also was the great commission, namely : "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost teaching them whatsoever I have commanded you" ; then the concluding words formed the great promise : "And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

If we are not to disobey the commandment of Christ, if we are not to fail the great commission, we must evangelize. We must spread abroad the good news. But proclamation involves two aspects, namely preaching by word of mouth and preaching by life. By our lives we can witness to Christ in the university, in this world.

Fellowship in reality and in hope

The Lord Who asks us to have faith in Him, also asks us to love one another. So I came to the second thought, namely love. Those who live the Gospel, those whose lives the Gospel pervades, or rather those in whom the Word of God turns into flesh, are those who proclaim the Gospel by action. Believers enjoy a fellowship with one another and this fellowship knows no barriers either racial, national or economic.

But fellowship in this world has its limitations. We look forward to a time when we will have the blessedness of its consummation — the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. Of course, the aspect of perfect nature is present right here in this fellowship we have here on earth, but it is not complete yet. This perfect fellowship is “both a present reality and a future hope”. By the terms “present reality” I understand the realization, in part, of that goal. But what we have in part now is to come in a full degree later and so we have hope towards the consummation — the substantiating of the foreshadowed.

These thoughts of faith, love and hope appear in my mind when I think of the Gospel.

Witness in life

Now, we need lives which are to be witnesses of the Gospel — the Word. “The Word of the Lord is near you — on your lips and in your heart.” The preaching of the Word must be strengthened by witness of life. In the proclamation of the Word — the good news — the truth will have to be presented by practical witness too. If the Word of God abides in me I will be a person who will be very sensitive to social injustice. Those who live the Gospel will not be those who can “tolerate sin, oppression and ignorance”. We will not merely be those who study and search after truth, simply for intellectual satisfaction but we will be those who study and learn about truth with a purpose. The motto of Judson College in Burma was “The Truth shall make you

free". By knowing the truth — by knowing the Word of God and by letting the Word pervade our actions and our lives — we will be free from prejudices, racial barriers and errors of glorification of either self, or reason.

Our common worship, our mutual concern, our sense of responsibility, our common discipline, our common study and action would all be witnesses, to others in the university, of our source of life. In Rangoon University, our Student Christian Union is numerically but a small group. But I feel that, unlike other associations in the University, we have a mark of fellowship. When in universities we are facing disintegration of faculties, loss of unity and over-specializations — here in the Student Christian Movement we meet together for a united fellowship despite interest, or even race, class or denomination.

Today back in Burma, we face a great problem of racial conflict between the Burmans and the Karens — one of the races in Burma. Yet in the Student Christian Movement Karens, Burmans, Chins, Kachins — all work together and think together. Even more than these, we have a sense of belonging to one another, and I have experienced many student friends coming to the halls of residence where S.C.M. members form the majority, and mention how there is a difference in the atmosphere of these halls and that of the other halls across the street.

Sensitiveness to social injustice

Again, to live the Gospel involves sensitiveness to social injustices in life. In the post-war period we encounter many problems and if we are not to fail the great commission entrusted to us we will have to proclaim the Word as the answer to all these situations. If communism appeals more than Christianity to many in the present days, I would say that it is very much due to our weakness in witnessing by our lives to the programme of Jesus of Nazareth :

“to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”.

We have often become indifferent. Often we are too inactive and often too insensitive to all our environments. We have known the good news. But we could not communicate the good news intelligibly to the surrounding people. We must try to present the good news to others so that to them the Word will carry conviction. They must clearly understand the driving force behind all our activities. “Mere activity without interpretation is defective as an expression of the Gospel.” If we think of rural uplift work, or even helping in improving certain situations, unless we are definite about making explicit or clear the Name in which all these are done, we shall not have fulfilled our duties. Our witness must be not only presented before the eyes of others but also to their head and to their heart.

Among the Christian students in Rangoon University many occasions have arisen when we have been reminded that we should not merely be lost in our activities but also always conscious of clarifying the force and the source of power behind all these activities.

Problems of interpretation

For the Gospel to be intelligible to the modern mind we need relevant vocabulary also. Too often we have come to accept, without paying much attention, the biblical vocabulary such as sin, redemption, sanctification. But often these terms have ceased to carry conviction even to those who use these words. As the times change and men develop different forms of attitude to life, the Gospel will have to be interpreted to make men, in their changed attitudes and changed times, come to realize the good news.

But the Gospel vocabulary must not be too twisted in our anxiety to make the Gospel intelligible to others. In fact it will be surely a sin on our part if we are too eager to make the Gospel acceptable to others. When I say "to make the Gospel acceptable to others" I mean the attempt to present the Word of God in such forms and ways as are moulded along the lines of human interests alone. The Gospel often has been biting and harsh to the hearers. "To the Greeks the Gospel was foolishness and to the Jews Christ was a stumbling block". We will have to present God's Word in God's way and God will work in diverse ways at diverse places at different times.

Then the living and interpretation of the Gospel also involve culture. In Burma Christians have often and generally been looked upon as aliens. If today in Burma the Burmans are a minority among Christian communities, I am very much inclined to feel that it is also because we have not made a serious attempt to interpret the Gospel to the cultural traits of the country. Christianity is attached to the West very much in the eyes of the non-Christians in Burma. The architecture, the music, the diction of the literature connected with the Gospel have been foreign to the eyes and ears of the non-Christian.

But in cultural interpretation of the Gospel again there are dangers of the salt losing its savour. We must not forget the main motivating truth which lead us to all these modes of cultural interpretation. In presenting the Gospel to those who are gripped by ideologies we shall have to search for means to show "how the Kingdom of God made real in Christ is far more satisfying than the Kingdom of man thought out by any of the ablest ideologists of the world".

The power of the Spirit

But I am afraid my presentation has at times placed too much emphasis on human thought, human action and human intelligence. In living and interpreting the

Gospel this underlying truth must be borne in our minds. No one can live, or interpret, the Gospel unless he has vivid experience of Christ Himself. He also must trust in God's promise and he must seek God's glory and not his own glory. No one can interpret the Gospel unless the Holy Spirit works in him, and again whatever method of interpretation he may use, all would be unintelligible to the individuals to whom the Gospel is being presented, unless the Holy Spirit works in them too.

But the contrary of this also is true and is full of hope, i. e. no one can resist the Word when the Holy Spirit works. Here we must not say that we must then sit down and wait for the Spirit to do everything. Our job will be ever to seek the Will of God and to do His work, if by some means we should fulfil part of the great commission entrusted to us.

The interpretation is at the highest level when God speaks through His own Word. The Bible unaided has often been the best way for a man to understand the good news.

"Souls living the Gospel" has often been more understood by others than many other ways of interpretation of the Gospel. Soul acting upon soul — or personal relationships between an individual who lives the Gospel and those who do not yet know the Gospel — has often led men to understand and accept the Word of God.

So we come back to the point from where we start, namely, the principle of Incarnation — the Word becoming flesh in our lives — the Word manifested in our actions and in our lives.

An excerpt from a New Zealand weekly runs :

Be careful how you live — you may be the only Bible some people ever read.

The Church in Africa, ancient and modern

MASON A. BEGHO

I have met several friends in Europe who think that the Equator is a tripod on which Africa stands and the heat from the centre radiates equally to every part of it. Some think, and are positively convinced, that the whole of the Continent of Africa is one stretch of jungle infested with dreadful tropical diseases. These generalisations are based on the law of averages and they are fallacious. I do not intend to teach geography here, but I would advise everyone interested in the ecumenical movement to study the physical geography of all the continents, or at least to have some idea of longitude and latitude !

As it is difficult for a Burmese or an Indian, or even a Chinese to speak on the whole vast Continent of Asia, so it is for a West African, or an East African, to speak on the whole of Africa. The whole Continent is a conglomeration of diversities — diversity of climate, diversity of vegetation, diversity of people and customs, and history.

In *The Student World*, Fourth Quarter 1948, Christian Dovlo says in his first paragraph : "In Africa... the Church struggles in an environment which is entirely pagan and ignorant of Christian truth. It is the breaking of altogether new ground and the carrying of a torch into *complete* darkness." Such a pronouncement is not wholly fair to this Continent and to the pioneer sons of Africa who, in the days of the Roman Empire, helped to carry on the work of evangelism. At this point, to be a little instructive to my friends of the ecumenical movement,

I crave the indulgence of my readers to digress a bit into history to show the African contribution to Christianity.

African Christian history

We must not forget that the Abyssinians claim their descent from the Queen of Sheba and that the Christian Axumite Kingdom in Northern Abyssinia was founded by Menelek. The Axumite dynasty was destroyed by Judith, but we are told that soon after that another Christian dynasty came into being — that of the Zagués.

Christianity was firmly established in Ethiopia in the fifth century from which time the first period of Ethiopic literature dates. The Ethiopic Church contributed much to biblical literature by its early translation of the Bible containing eighty-one books as it included various apocryphal works which we are told "other parts of Christendom have lost or possess only in an imperfect form". A careful examination of St. Matthew in the Ethiopic Bible led scholars to believing that the version of the Gospels was made about A.D. 500. The Book of Enoch written in the second and first centuries B.C., we are told by authorities, was well known by the writers of the New Testament and in many instances influenced their thought and tradition. Of the versions of this Book in Greek, Latin and Ethiopic, it is accepted by scholars that the Ethiopic version alone "preserves the entire text". The number of the manuscripts of this version in circulation in Europe is given as twenty-eight, of which fifteen are to be found in England.

We cannot forget the rôle played by such men as Sextus Julius Africanus and Sabellius in the early Christian era. Sextus Julius Africanus — born in Libya, was a Christian traveller and great historian of the third century. He was made a bishop by Dionysius. He wrote the History of the World which Eusebius extensively used in compiling the early episcopal lists.

Sabellius — an early Christian presbyter and theologian, was also of Libyan origin. He studied in Rome

in the third century. He it was who taught that "the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the same person" and had great followers, especially in the East. It was his teaching that paved the way for Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity.

In studying the life of Pope Gregory (540-604), and his great social work in ministering unto the physical necessities of his flock, distributing food to the poor in the convents and basilicas, we find history mentioning the name of Africa as one of the important places where funds for these kind works were obtained. We also read in history that Gregory "in his relation with certain Churches, as those in Africa, he found it expedient to abstain from any obtrusive assertion of Roman claims" for he was a Pope who "consistently used his influence to increase the prestige and authority of the Roman See". From this point of view is it correct to say that the Church in Africa is as young as Christian Dovlo asserted, and is the Christian movement in Africa today like "the carrying of a torch into complete darkness"? Can we run away from the fact that most of the Northern part of Africa was Christian when most of the inhabitants of Western Europe, especially Gaul and Britain, were druids worshipping the oak and mistletoe and offering human sacrifices?

Africa in the Bible

All this is history, but let us come nearer home to the Bible. Was the Egypt — in which Joseph lived, and of which "was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, out of Egypt have I called my Son", and where Christ passed his youthful days till the death of Herod, — *entirely* pagan and in *complete* darkness? Could not the presence of Christ have given light to Egypt? What was God's purpose in choosing a country in Africa as the refuge for His only begotten son? Even before this time, why was it that it was Egypt that God chose to relieve the famine in Palestine under which the children

of Abraham were almost perishing? These things must have a purpose, for God does nothing without a purpose. Did not an Ethiopian chamberlain and some others from the Continent of Africa receive baptism in Jerusalem when Western Europe knew nothing about Christianity? From history we know of the early commercial contact between Abyssinia and Palestine.

I am not saying that every part of Africa that came in touch with Jerusalem after the death of Christ accepted the Gospel, for "the Jews themselves rejected the Gospel and so there was need, and there is need to evangelise them". However, it would be unfair to dub them as "entirely pagan and ignorant of Christian truth". We must not forget that they had the Light of the World with them, and they were the people who started evangelism, though owing to wars and the concomitant changes in social and political system, they need now to be re-evangelised. The Egyptians, nay Africans, suffered the same fate and they need also to be re-evangelised!

The difficult calling of the missionary

The Church in Nigeria, like most parts of Africa today, is mostly manned by European missionaries, and she has not been able to win the whole country for Christ owing to the failure of many of these missionaries to practise what they preach, for most Africans live by examples and not by what they are merely told. They copy more from an exemplary life than all the books in the world, or all the sermons from the pulpit, can teach them. Little acts of kindness create an indelible impression in their hearts. They look to the missionaries who bring them the good news of the Kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of love (for God is Love) to love them, cheer them when they are sad, visit them when they are sick, give them water when they are thirsty, side them against their oppressors when they are oppressed, and for goodness' sake live with them and not in a privileged secluded area.

I often wonder whether the minister loves members of his Church as the shepherd his flock, for Christ truly makes him His shepherd by asking him to "feed my sheep and feed my lamb". This is a sacred duty which missionaries in most parts of Africa, especially South Africa, do not realise. Are they then worth their salt as ministers? A shepherd does not suffer any sheep to go astray, nor to be hurt, or uncared for, for he has a wonderful love for all of them. It is this sort of love Christ wants His ministers to show to those to whom they preach the Gospel. It is not enough merely to preach half-heartedly from the pulpit and to say to oneself, "I have preached the Gospel; those who have ears to hear, let them hear", when one has done nothing to make them feel the fulfilment of the Gospel. In doing that, one is worse than the unwilling Jonah and one has not done one's duty.

Christ did not only speak, but acted. He ministered unto the essential needs of man, spiritually and materially. He did not segregate Himself from His flock; He loved and lived with the poor and oppressed. His life was exemplary. We cannot be like Christ, but at least we can try. It is not uncommon to find in several places in Africa today that there is discrimination against African ministers and this is most apparent in the disparity of pay and in the furnished quarters allotted to them. This makes a heathen wonder whether there is discrimination also in heaven.

However, this article is not to expose foibles, but to give practical suggestions of how the whole Continent of Africa may be won for Christ. The young missionary to Africa must try to be the true shepherd of his flock. He must live with the people and try to understand them; study their languages, love them and minister both to their spiritual and material needs.

The approach to Moslems

It must be remembered that a great part of Africa, especially the North, is predominantly Moslem. During

the Dark Ages when conquerors who had nothing to offer destroyed civilisation, the Northern part of Africa was overrun by the followers of Mohammed who propagated Islam with fire and sword. This movement came as far South as Nigeria, and the Northern part was completely won by Othman dan Fodio with fire and sword for Islam. As a result, today in Nigeria, the Northern part is predominantly Moslem with only a small strip of land occupied by a race of pagans who are nudes and the territories of which it has pleased both the Government and missionary to leave untouched.

Now, what I want to suggest is the strategy of the Church "in the Moslem world of Nigeria". In Nigeria, Moslems are not hostile to Christians ; both live together amicably well. The Moslems of the South are more progressive than those of the North as they copy quite a lot of things from their Christian brothers. Some Moslems at Lagos even now adopt the Christian ceremony of the cutting of the cake at wedding, and they even use the Christian type of veil. Truly they see quite a lot of enviable things in Christianity and a little tact judiciously exercised will tilt them over to us. But the greatest set-back is their seeing that Christians do not love one another. A Moslem will always help another Moslem in trouble, but not so with Christians. In the North, the unofficial but practised Moslem philosophy is "Live for today, for tomorrow your soul may be required of the Lord, and be sweet and kind to people even though this may need the sacrifice of your last penny". He does not mind giving away all he has today and to go begging tomorrow. He has the firm conviction that God will bring relief, and invariably he has it. It is this sort of generosity he looks for in a Christian and does not find in him.

In the office where I was working during the war, there was a young Christian who was heavily in debt and was going to be cast into the debtors' jail. Some friends advised him to become a Moslem and his debts would be paid. He was converted and truly his debt was

paid. This is not to suggest that the debt of every Christian should be paid for him, but it is seriously to show how generous these Moslems are, one to another. They have several virtues which we Christians lack. Their moral standard is high and they are very faithful to their friends. In order to win them, Christians have got to live like Christians in the real sense of the word by being less selfish, less immoral, less deceptive, and above all preach and practise the Gospel of Love.

The strategy to use with pagans

A whole village of pagans could be won in a day by ministering to their total needs in the name of Christ. Give them a church, a hospital and a school, and feed them spiritually and materially. You must minister unto "the totality of men", as my friend Dr. Karefa-Smart put it at the Woudschoten Conference. "Health is the state that animates all the pleasures of life", and you scarcely can realise the appreciation of a man whose health has been restored in the name of Christ ; he will remain for ever a Christian. Christ realised how weak the body of a man is, and to make it a healthy temple for the divine spirit to dwell therein, He started His miracles by providing wine and food for the body and healing it wherever there was "wear and tear".

Mr. Dovlo mentioned that some Christians in Africa fall back to the fetish-priest for divination and healing. This sort of thing happens because of the inadequate attention of medical care. I have known of people who travel sixty, or even one hundred and twenty, miles from their homes to get to the nearest hospital or dispensary. Instead of perishing under their disease such people will submit to any person who offers to cure them whether a fetish-priest, or even the devil himself. There are very few people today who can stand the test of Job. I do not think there are any in Europe and so I cannot vouch for Africa ! Truly, Africa needs thousands of trained doctors and nurses in the missionary field. Indeed, the harvest is rich but the labourers are few.

The Task of the Church in Asia

K. H. TING

First of all I should like to apologize that, owing to my lack of sufficient background, my ability to write on the subject "The task of the Church in Asia" will be limited by my experience as a Chinese Christian. However, I do not think this is too big a handicap, because China, in all essential ways, is typical of Asia and certainly not exceptional. In China, all the weaknesses, problems, struggles, despairs, fears and hopes of Asia are only focussed and intensified to the *n'th* degree. What is happening in China is beginning to happen in other parts of Asia.

The first thing I should like to do is to call your attention to the fact that the Church *is* in Asia. This may sound too obvious to need to be mentioned. But it is a fact we cannot afford to take for granted.

When the Church brought the Gospel to Europe not much stubborn resistance on the part of the natives was encountered. The Church, to be sure, did not come into a vacuum or a no-man's land but it represented a much higher level of civilization and it civilized and Christianized the pagan barbarians. But when the Christian religion was introduced to many parts of Asia it came face to face with civilizations with long history behind them. There were highly developed religious and ethical systems and indigenous social institutions. Western missionaries were regarded as barbarians and were definitely at a disadvantage in face of this repellent attitude. For years and years they could not convert a single Asian to Christian faith. All they received was

suspicion, ridicule, alienation and even persecution. When we think of this difficult origin of Christianity in Asia, for us to be able to speak today of the Church in Asia is nothing short of a miracle. We cannot afford to take this mighty act of God for granted.

The Church has taken root

How is the Church established in the soil of Asia today? Let me just give a few illustrations.

First, today, when we speak of the Church in Asia we do not merely mean that there are missionaries in Asia. We mean that there are hundreds and thousands of Asian Christians who in their own ways can say why they believe in Christ. We do not mean that there are "mission stations" here and there in Asia. We mean that there are churches, universities, schools, hospitals and other institutions all over the continent maintaining a close contact with the people of Asia. This fact is even more meaningful to Christians in Asia than it is to you. Only a few decades ago Chinese Christians would tell you that they were members of the "Norwegian Lutheran Mission" or of the "American Baptist Mission South" (although, I presume, they knew nothing about the Civil War in America). But, today, they are likely to tell you with some pride that they are members of the *Chung Hua Kyi To Chiao Hui*, i. e. the United Church of Christ in China, or of the *Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui*, i. e. the Holy Catholic Church of China, which is the Chinese counterpart of the Anglican Church. These and other Churches have helped them and they have sacrificed themselves for these Churches, especially since the years of the Sino-Japanese war. So they are their own Churches.

A second illustration of the fact that the Church is taking root in Asia is perhaps the growth of Asian leadership. Take the Chinese Anglican Church as an example. Before the Sino-Japanese war we had fifteen Bishops and seven of them passed away during the eight years of the

war. Now, for the little Anglican Church of China to lose seven out of fifteen Bishops was an extremely heavy casualty to suffer. Yet, today, three years after the end of the war, we have twenty-three Bishops. A year ago twelve out of the twenty-three were Western and eleven were Chinese. But, now, there are twelve Chinese Bishops and eleven Western Bishops. This is an indication of how the growth of Chinese leadership has just turned an important corner.

Another illustration of the vigor in the Church in Asia is perhaps the determination on the part of many Christians there that, while it is very essential that we should maintain our continuity and unity with the Church of Christ in the whole world, we should not be a mere replica of the Church in the West. God wants to use the Church in Asia to speak His word of salvation to the Asians and God enjoys to have the Church in Asia bring to Him all our prayers and praise, life and work, art and thought, in the way most natural to us rather than in the Western way. This consciousness of freedom in the Holy Spirit as the children of God makes them bolder to enter into new experiments. So, you hear of the Church union schemes in India and Ceylon and that the Bishops from China asked the Lambeth Conference to consider the question of the ordination of women to the priesthood. It is interesting to note that this proposal should come from China where for thousands of years women have been considered inferior and that the main opposition to this proposal should come from the West where for hundred of years the equality of men and women has been spoken of. Please, do not think that the Church in Asia has at all gone far in producing much creative expression of its life in Christ. I only mean that there is a growing feeling that in theology, in worship, in art and in Church life, if our job is merely to imitate then we are still slaves. We shall be really free if we will only allow the Holy Spirit to mould us into what He wants the Church in Asia to be. And this certainly does not mean that Western missionaries must

therefore leave the Asian Church alone. I think they are an indispensable factor to help the Church in Asia to grow and become itself.

Another illustration of the same thing is perhaps the influence of the Church on the general life and thinking of society. That influence far surpasses what the numerical strength of the Church in Asia would warrant you to suppose. I have just been reading something which speaks about the incorporation of many biblical terms into general usage in modern Chinese literature, such as regeneration, baptism, etc. Many modern Chinese writers and playwrights have used materials from the New Testament for their themes and ideas in their work.

Still another illustration is that the Church in Asia, weak as it still is and much as it still must rely on the Christians of the West for its spiritual, material and personnel resources, is already quite conscious of its own missionary vocation. Somehow it realizes that the vitality of Christian life depends on passing it on to others. Thus, the Student Christian Movement of India, Pakistan and Ceylon is developing something very similar to the Student Volunteer Movement of the West. The Church in India has actually begun to send missionaries out to other countries. In China Christians have started missionary work both in Southwest China, among the aborigines and in Northwest China for the reconversion of that area where the first attempt to evangelize China was heroically made by the Nestorian Christians and pathetically collapsed after a flourishing period of over two hundred years.

Its task has just begun

Thus far, I have given you a picture of the brighter side of the Church in Asia. Here a very important word of caution must be made. While we glorify God for the fact of the Church in Asia — and, today, when there is so much hopelessness and despairing talk of “mis-

sionary retreat" from China and Asia, I think it should be specially permissible and desirable to review a little bit of the wonder that has already been wrought in spite of environmental difficulties and in spite of ourselves — let us not for one moment romanticize the Church of Asia and its achievements. Let us remember that, internally, it is weak and cold in many parts and, externally, it has perhaps barely touched one-hundredth part of the problems and population of the vast Continent. The most we can claim is that, today, the foundation has been laid on which the building of the superstructure is being called for. God has given us the miracle of the Church in Asia only as a sign or demonstration that His Gospel is meant for Asia also. Whereas the early missionaries to Asia had to live and labor entirely on the strength of their faith in tomorrow, missionaries to Asia today can labor and look to tomorrow on the strength of what God has done with the Church in Asia yesterday.

Some students in the West say that since things seem to go rather well in the Church in Asia they do not think there is any more call to them to be missionaries there. I think they are misreading God's sign rather badly. When God led St. Peter to come down from the house-top and showed him how the Holy Spirit descended upon Cornelius and his company just as naturally as upon the Christians in Jerusalem, God was helping St. Peter to see the power of the Gospel unto the salvation of all men. God gave that demonstration to St. Peter certainly not to order him to retreat, but to give him encouragement to proceed to evangelize the "Gentiles" more vigorously.

How to face revolution

The Asia which the Church finds itself in is today in a revolutionary upheaval. How is the Church to steer its course? If Nestorian Christianity could be uprooted after establishing itself in China for over two hundred

years, how can we be sure that the Church is going to survive the present revolution?

We have no way to be sure of that and I do not think God wants to give us that assurance. This is perhaps His way to give us the discipline of obedience to the Holy Spirit. Our survival and, indeed, our revival depends on the Church's striving to be true to its calling as the Church. As soon as we begin to be opportunist, we slip into being a mere human society. And we shall not be able to survive the changes of the world.

The first thing to be said about a revolution is that we should not be afraid of it or get too excited about it. We should understand it for what it is. A revolution is a fever in society. The revolution is not the disease itself but the result of the disease, just as the fever is not the disease itself, but an indication of the disease. No matter how we may dislike its terror we must learn to recognize it, once it happens, as an inevitable, passing phase. It happens only because of the decadence and evil of the *status quo* which lags way behind the changes which justice demands. While the Church cannot easily endorse the romance, the optimism, the method and the tendency to depreciate historic values and cultures in a revolution, the Church must resist the attempts of the *status quo* to make it a partner in its decadence and in its struggle to keep its clutch on the masses of the people.

I think there is a real danger of our loss of initiative in our tension with communism. It would be comparatively easy for the Church to commit itself either to the communist, or the anti-communist position. But in either case the Church would be neglecting its obedience to the Holy Spirit Who is the Living Lord in every particular situation and in obedience to Whom only we can have real freedom. If we make a commitment in regard to communism once for all we may succeed in evading our responsibility to make daily (or even hourly) moral decisions but we shall have barred the working of the Spirit in us and through us. We know how communism becomes a religion to its adherents, but let us

not overlook that anti-communism can also be made into a religion, if we allow it to be the real norm of our judgments. Then we shall be setting up a false god and become idolaters.

Neither optimism nor pessimism

What does this mean ? It means that I must continue to try to judge everything on its own merit. I believe that in so doing I shall be in less danger of obstructing the light of the Holy Spirit to guide me. It means that I must not take it for granted that every communist act has nothing but sinister nature in it. Sincerely but experimentally I must give any particular act or policy of any particular person, or group, in any particular moment, in any particular place or country, the benefit of proving its own worth apart from any pre-judgment which I may tend to transfer from elsewhere. I am sure that this represents the attitude of many Christians in Asia. It may sound naïve but it is a naïveté with redeeming possibilities which complete cynicism about communism cannot have.

In China, for reasons of expediency which the Chinese communists know best, they are permitting Christian groups to continue on. Two of our thirteen Christian universities are now functioning in communist areas and, up to this moment, reports seem to indicate that they are faring more or less as usual. The communists have not interfered in the policy and administration of the universities, except that they have asked that the compulsory courses on Kuomintang Party Doctrines imposed on them by the Nanking Government should be dropped. This the university authorities were only too glad to do anyway. The communists have also invited the missionaries to stay. But we do not know what tomorrow has in store for us.

This should give us ground neither for optimism nor for pessimism. We have no reason to be pessimistic because we know we do not have much right to expect

political authorities to be sincere and kind to us anyway. We can be sure that Christ was thinking of circumstances such as we are facing when He said, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake... Rejoice, and be exceeding glad..." But we have no reason to be optimistic either because the Church is under a strong, but subtle, temptation to deny itself. During the last twenty years the special temptation the Chinese Christians faced was to identify themselves too closely with the Nationalist regime. We have suffered and are still suffering for that. From now on our temptation is to follow the line of the least resistance in our tension with the new regime and to become blind in idealizing it. Between easy pessimism and easy optimism the Church is simply to strive to be itself and carry on its witness and be prepared to be perpetually in a tension with the world.

What is the Church to do in the revolutionary Asia or China? Basically it is just to do what it ought to do anywhere — to show forth the power of the Gospel through its words, deeds and the life of its community. A revolutionary situation brings with it an extreme optimism in what men can do through their unity and gives fantastic promises to the people. It is like the Prodigal Son upon leaving his father's home with all his wonderful dreams of freedom and adventure. The Christian Gospel may look very pale in that situation and the non-Christian world, with its heart and soul overwhelmed by the revolutionary sentiment, tends to be sceptical of Christianity. Under that circumstance, Christians are tempted to revise their beliefs with the hope that they may conform to the optimism in fashion. But this revision is a fatal compromise and is utterly opportunistic. We should rather strengthen our evangelistic task so that, as soon as the post-revolutionary despair sets in the Church will be ready to receive with open arms the many tired revolutionaries and worn-out optimists. Through his suffering the Prodigal Son is bound to come to himself and say, "I will arise and go

to my Father". The Church can then offer him the hope and the task that are durable.

True and false forgiveness

Let me give you an example. In 1937, upon the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, many of my Chinese student Christian friends were moved by a very challenging event to discuss the meaning of forgiveness. Some of you probably remember that before the Sino-Japanese war there were ten years during which the Nationalists and the communists fought against each other. The wife and all the four children of General Chu Teh, the Commander-in-Chief of the communist troops, were captured and beheaded upon the order of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Many other communist leaders faced similar calamities. It is not necessary for me to describe how bitter they must have felt. Yet, in 1937, as soon as Japan attacked China, General Chu and his men were the first ones to send a telegram to Chiang in which they pledged their support and obedience to Chiang as the leader of national resistance. And they really meant it. While many of Gen. Chiang's own generals surrendered their troops to the enemy and became collaborators, the communist generals fought most bravely and not a single one of them went to the enemy side. Now General Chu's magnanimity and forgiving spirit was so great and admirable and challenging that many of our student friends seriously wondered whether there was anything in Christianity that was really comparable. We were put to shame when we contrasted General Chu's forgiving spirit with our own petty considerations and self-righteousness when we talked of forgiveness. There, communism as incarnated in this rugged communist became a real temptation to Christians.

Even today, I still admire General Chu whom many of my fellow countrymen esteem as their hero. Whatever I have to say about communism, General Chu revealed to me something of the glory of man when he was able

to subordinate all his personal bitterness to the necessity of his practical strategy and tactics, based on his interpretation of history. Not any other animal, and not many other men can do this. The historical process is his centre of reference and is his pride as long as he is sure that he and history are on the same side. To that he is happy to surrender all his personal pride and bitterness and belongings. In this atheist I saw something of what one who seriously believes in God should be like.

Yet, I also realize that man in all his moral glory apart from God is still very miserable when he is set against the criterion of the Kingdom. No matter how a child of God fails to forgive his fellow men there is something from God in him which gives him a status in the grace of God and in the Church of Christ not anything human moral excellence can compare with. The forgiveness between General Chu and General Chiang was a forgiveness without repentance before God, a forgiveness dictated entirely by the expediency of power-politics. It has nothing in common with the Christian forgiveness between brothers through their common acceptance of the forgiving love of God. Eight years after their mutual forgiveness they were at war again because, this time, political expediency in the name of history made a different demand.

The challenge to present the Gospel

What shall we say then? Communism is a challenge to Christians to be Christians and to the Church to be the Church. It is a challenge to Christians either to produce the "real stuff" as we Chinese sometimes say, or to give up entirely. And in seeing the challenge we are also given to see its inadequacy and its being a part of men's disorder rather than of God's own design. It cannot change the monotonous pattern of history in which revolution turns into counter-revolution and thesis into its own antithesis. Only the Gospel of Christ will

give the world the deliverance from this pattern and the vision of the conclusion of history as we have known it which is the real beginning of history on a new plane.

So I firmly believe that the Gospel itself is relevant to revolutionary China. In fact I believe that in the next period, if we take a positive and constructive attitude towards the changes under "New Democracy" in China, we may enter a very creative stage in the evangelization of China. Even if we fail to evangelize the communists our direct contact with them cannot fail to help us discover the hidden treasure in the Gospel, as well as to discard the many man-made burdens the Church has been carrying. The task is for the Church, besides striving to be what it ought to be, to learn the art of communication. We know that the Christian Gospel is itself a foreign substance to every people and to every human individual because of its uprooting power in the sick soul. Before anybody rallies himself to say, "To whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life", he is bound to find the Gospel so repugnant as to say, "Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinner". Recognizing this intrinsic foreignness of the Christian Gospel to man, we must present it to our people in such a way that they can take its challenge seriously without having to be barred by any extra foreignness that does not belong to the Gospel itself, but is unnecessarily added by our poor communication.

This is specially important in China because the Chinese people, in comparison with the other Asian races, are a very irreligious people. When Christianity was introduced into India there immediately happened religious oppositions and clashes. But we have never had that in China. Our opposition to Christianity has been mainly ethical and political. Tolerance is the Chinese sin, not virtue, because it makes people unable to take religion seriously, from Confucius down to the modern student.

The Church's social task

Before I finish I must say a word about the place of material relief and reconstruction in the witness of the Church in Asia.

In China and in practically all parts of Asia, people are suffering. They are languishing under the yoke of feudalism and domestic and foreign exploitation and today their patience has reached the point of exhaustion. They need food, clothes and shelter and these are very legitimate needs. In face of suffering and starving men, women and children the Church most naturally wants to relieve them, and to enable them to make something of their lives.

When Jesus fed the five thousand (many of whom could not have heard what he had said or were around just out of curiosity) He fed them just because they were hungry. We too ought to relieve the suffering masses in their distress, even if we know we cannot hope that they be converted to the Christian faith. To administer relief with too conscious an intention of direct evangelism may lead us back to the old, unhappy pattern of producing "rice Christians". I do not think we ought to condemn a "rice Christian" very harshly because, when a man has worked hard and is still hungry, his natural instinct of self-preservation and his noble care for his loved ones drive him to places where he can obtain some rice. If he has to pretend to believe in Christianity it is only because Christians have made that belief a pre-requisite and have thus encouraged the pretension. The Church should give him rice, should not make relief conditional on what one says he believes, and should look into the social system that produces so much hunger.

In China I found that the greatest temptation to a hungry person is that to believe that man lives by bread alone, i. e. to over-simplify the human problem by bitterly accusing the environment as responsible for all

the sins a man commits. This attitude results in both a debased conception of human life and an undue optimism regarding the possibility of ushering in the Perfect Society merely through material rearrangements. This is definitely opposed to the Christian teaching. How is the Church to bear its witness in that situation? Mere oral preaching is not enough. We must do something about the people's bread and about the problems of their material living. In so doing we show the world that we do agree that man lives by bread. This point of contact gives us a strong position to proclaim with authority our point of departure: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. So material relief and reconstruction is important to the Church because it makes it impossible for people to believe cynically that man lives by bread alone.

Some Christians in the West who are themselves disillusioned by man's abuse of sciences and machines tend to think that the kind of agricultural-feudalistic set-up which still somehow persists in the East might be a happier "synthesis" and that, consequently, we should rather maintain it. This seems to me to be a completely unrealistic thought from the standpoint of history. It is very questionable if this despair can be considered as a theologically legitimate part of the Christian faith. I suspect that in part it reflects the despair and frustration of a decadent culture which sees no prospect for itself but refuses to give way. The Christians must correct the naïve tendency to make false gods of science and the machine, but must still adopt a positive, sympathetic and constructive attitude to the aspiration and movement for industrialization in Asia today. A machine embodies in it the original raw material in nature, dug out of the good earth, worked on by man's mental and manual labor, made possible through a complex historical and social network of experience and organization, potentially usable to call forth a larger portion of God's gift to man. It is in an important sense a Sacrament in

that it is matter through which the grace of God comes to man. As such, Christians in Asia welcome it.

The subject of this article is *The Task of the Church in Asia*. There are two ways to understand that subject. It means either the task of the Asian Church or the Church's task in Asia. Throughout my article I have implied that it is not merely a task of the Asian Christians but of the Christians all over the world. I shall pray that through my readers more Christians in the world will hear the call and share in the task.

The Regeneration of Europe

W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

In July 1944 there appeared in the press a statement that the representatives of the European resistance movements had met in a city in occupied Europe and had issued a common manifesto. This news item was not wholly correct, for the meetings had in fact taken place in my home in Geneva ; the indication of another place was simply a matter of war strategy. The group was composed of men and women most of whom had played a considerable rôle in their national resistance movements. Eastern and Western Europe were both represented. There were several Italians and after a difficult discussion a representative of the German resistance was finally admitted.

Unity born in war-time

What did this queer combination of people from very different national, social and political backgrounds have to say together ? They agreed in this positive conviction laid down in their manifesto in the following words : "So much sacrifice and suffering undergone for the same cause have created among us a sense of brotherhood and have created a new consciousness of the European solidarity of free peoples — a solidarity the maintenance of which will be one of the essential foundations of the peace." In its later sessions the group drew up a detailed plan for a European Federation which was submitted to the resistance-councils in several countries.

Before the war this concept of a federated Europe had remained a somewhat abstract notion. The enthusiasm of Coudenhove-Kalergi and the oratory of Briand had not succeeded in making it a vital ideal. But during

the war and in the ranks of the resistance it had become an *idée-force*, a dynamic conviction for which many were ready to fight. It came alive at the same time in the hearts and minds of the intellectual leaders of the resistance movements: Teitgen, Philip, Courtin in France; Brugmans in Holland; the group of von Moltke and von Trott in Germany; the Federalists in Italy. It is therefore by no means an accident that so many of the present day leaders of the European movements are former comrades of the resistance days.

Nevertheless, the immediate post-war days did not prove to be a favourable moment for realising the new European ideal. After all, the resistance had only been a relatively small section of the nations concerned, and within the resistance movement only the élite had really become aware of the new task and the new opportunity. Among the masses nationalism was at its height; the need to keep on the right side of Russia (which was deeply suspicious of European Unity) kept the governments from taking action. There was little readiness to consider giving any place to Germany in a European Federation. And how could Europe be federated without Germany?

Unity forced upon Europe

In the last two years, however, the situation has changed again. Today for the first time in history European Unity becomes a matter of *practical politics*. It is true that this development affects only a part of Europe, but in that part at least definite steps are taken to set up a new inter-governmental structure. What lies behind this? Does it mean that after all the burning conviction of the resistance leaders has resulted in a mobilisation of the masses, and that the peoples concerned are now at last clamouring for an integration of their long disrupted continent? Unfortunately not. The *real* motives which inspire the governments to go ahead in this direction are much more pragmatical. The truth is that even this little beginning is forced upon them by

realities and conditions which play upon Europe from the outside. The determining factors are on the one hand the Marshall plan and on the other hand the pressure exerted by Russia. Compared with these factors, the inner urge, the desire for and conviction about European unity is still extremely weak.

The importance of the Marshall Plan for European Unity cannot easily be exaggerated. Secretary Marshall showed remarkable political imagination when he formulated in June 1947 the plan to aid the European nations, if these nations should work out a *joint* programme, and when he made it clear that America would not deal with the European nations on a national but on a *regional* basis. For thus he exerted a pressure on Europe which is the only pressure acceptable to self-respecting nations — the pressure to help themselves by acting together. Moreover in this way America renders a great service to itself as well as to Europe. An economically sound and politically stable Europe is also an essential American concern. There is no need to look for ulterior motives behind the Marshall plan because the object of the plan is so clearly in the interest of both Continents.

The other factor is the pressure exerted by Soviet Russia — a pressure which is vastly increased by the presence in all European countries of parties which are directly related to and effectively controlled by the Moscow authorities. It is natural that that part of Europe which is not in the zone of direct Russian influence seeks to strengthen its position by measures of common political, economic and military defence. The memory of a great power which succeeded for a time in its plan to dominate the whole of Europe by attacking the nations one by one is so fresh in the minds of the peoples that they need little convincing to make common cause in this respect.

Thus the two main factors which are in the process of uniting an important part of Europe are fundamentally *external* factors. Europe owes its beginnings of

integration to the political constellation in which America and Russia have emerged as the decisive forces. This is a dangerous situation. It is dangerous because a forced unity is not a lasting unity. It is also dangerous because a unity imposed by external pressure, rather than grown up from within, may easily become the wrong kind of unity — a unity which may destroy essential elements of the European heritage.

For the question is not alone whether Europe will live but for what purpose it will live. At the present moment that question is still unanswered. We are in process of building a European skeleton without a soul — an economic, military and political structure without substance; a Europe which will be an object rather than a subject of world history and which may therefore be influenced by every new wind of ideology.

False Europes

The life and death question for Europe is then whether it can rediscover its own *specific* mission. Europe must therefore not become the prey of Russian communism. And that not because we must at all costs save the remnants of a bourgeois and capitalist civilisation; but because the truths for which Europe has stood in history and which are as true today as ever would be obscured and denied. Communism has been invented in Europe. In its original and purely philosophical form it was a heresy which showed in its dream of freedom that it was inwardly related to the doctrines against which it protested. But in the form in which it has been applied in Russia it has become increasingly a revolt against the very conception of man for which all creative forces in Europe have stood in one way or another.

But Europe must not become an outpost of America either. America and Europe have much in common, but they have different vocations. Europe carries a heritage made up of much error and conflict, but also of much suffering; of much greed and shame but also of much sacrifice in the struggle for truth. Europe is

responsible for this heritage and it would deny it, if it let itself be tempted by the easier ways of a young, less experienced civilisation. Europe has moreover been led out of the stage of liberalism and capitalism, partly by circumstance and partly by insight. In the present hour of European history, to be an unrepentant capitalist is to be blind. In America, however, it would seem that capitalism has not yet come to the end of its possibilities.

But Europe must not let itself be united by the obsession of mere negations and fears. There is today less danger of strong anti-American feelings but there is truth in Reinhold Niebuhr's statement: "They all fear America." There is much hidden resentment of the easily acquired wealth of America and its superiority complexes. But such attitudes are sterile. It is in the interest of Europe and of the whole world that we do nothing to throw America back upon itself. Europe's task is precisely to strengthen that part of America which has a genuine sense of responsibility for the old world, and that is not done by fear but by an appeal to the generous and far-sighted among the American people. And though Europe and America may live in different social and economic stages, they have important common values to defend *together*.

The danger of a purely anti-Russian bloc formation and of a unity directed *against* communism is much more acute. But it is also a temptation. The more we get obsessed by the great Eastern power the less we are able to see our own situation clearly. The present propaganda is already well on the way to distort our sense of proportion and our scale of values. There is already too much willingness to accept any ally, any slogan, any method as long as they will be useful in the cold war. But all this undermines the very cause which Europe has to defend. The only true defence against communism is to eliminate the reasons for its attractiveness to the masses. The quickest way to make it inevitable is to entrench Europe in the *status quo*.

Moreover, the part of Europe which is now working out its unity must never forget that it is no more than a *part* of Europe. Somehow and at some time it will have to win back the European countries behind the curtain, and it will have to come to a true understanding with Russia. And there is no more pressing task than the re-integration of the millions of communists in western Europe itself. This it will only be able to do if it does not remain deaf to the real challenge of communism and seeks to discover how it can meet the longing for comradeship and the cry for justice which make the appeal of communism so very strong. A Europe which seeks its principle of unity in anti-communism remains finally a Europe divided against itself.

There remains the possibility that Europe becomes a battle-field of the world's most powerful ideologies. But that would be the worst of all. The terrible thing about these giant forces is that to a large extent they radicalise and absolutise each other. The fear of America makes Russia increasingly totalitarian. The reaction against Russia tends to make America more resolute and self-conscious in its rejection of socialist conceptions. This sterile dialogue will lead to armed conflict some day, unless a new element enters into the situation. And woe to those over whose heads and in whose territory the conflict is fought out. Europeans who desire war and work for it are dangerous fools. For war might well mean the end of Europe. And the real problem — the problem how to overcome nihilism in its various forms — would not be solved but aggravated by it. On the other hand, it is conceivable that, if Europe on the one hand and Asia on the other develop a third conception of society and become independent spiritual and social forces, they may take some of the poison out of the antagonism of the super-powers. In the present situation of radical misunderstanding between these powers — a misunderstanding which makes any constructive conversation impossible — there is a crying need for mutual interpretation by a third party.

The judgment

But what then is the true *raison d'être* of European unity? What is the basis on which Europe can stand, be itself and accomplish its mission in the world? That question cannot be answered by historical or cultural analysis alone. For Europe has been visited by a great and terrible judgment of God. And the present mission of Europe can only be understood if we grasp the meaning of that judgment.

According to the prophetic vision of history — the biblical vision — each civilisation has its peculiar mandate from God. But if it ceases to let itself be used as an *instrument*, if the divine mandate is turned into a pretext for self-assertion and pride, then judgment overtakes it. It is humiliated until the world exclaims: "Is this the one that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?" (Isaiah 14: 16). That is exactly what has happened to Europe. It had received the light of the Gospel in order to pass it on to the world. It owes its very life, its spiritual and moral energies to that Gospel. This little continent had thus become the spiritual and political centre of the world. But it said like Assur in Isaiah's prophecy: "By the strength of *my* hand I have done it and by *my* wisdom... My hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathered eggs that are left have I gathered all the earth and there was none that moved the wing or opened the mouth or peeped" (a most adequate description of the era of imperialism). But the Lord has come to ask: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Therefore shall the Lord send among his fat ones leanness and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire" (Isaiah 10). Europe — Assur is judged — its pride must be broken. It must be reminded that it is *not* by its own force that it performed its historic mission. But judgment does not necessarily mean extinction. It *may* mean a new

beginning. For the Lord even scourgeth those whom He loves.

Such new beginning depends on the reality of repentance — *concrete* repentance which is the clear realisation of the sin which has been committed and the readiness to accept renewal. The sin of civilisations is always the same. It is to treat a God-given grace as a man-made achievement, to use that grace for self-aggrandizement instead of service.

Think of what Europe had received! Through its faith in a Creator-God Who had revealed Himself in history, Europe alone possessed that sense of the meaningfulness of history which made it the dynamic, creative force among the continents. All that Europe has given to the world is somehow rooted in that fundamental conviction which even secularists and communists have inherited from the Hebrew-Christian sources. But Europe's dynamism which was destined to be a blessing to the nations has become self-centred and therefore distorted. The *charisma* was interpreted as a privilege and as conferring the right to dominate and to exploit. Thus the salt lost its taste. And the very continent that had stood for meaning in a meaningless world is today the continent in which nihilism triumphs.

Or take this other example. Europe received the gift of the *Church*: that is of a spiritual society which was called to be a reminder of the Kingdom of God — and which was thus to keep in check and to counteract the political societies. But that Church began to think in terms of its own perpetuation as an institution and to act as a state. And when it broke in fragments the very sense of the one Church was lost and the so-called national Churches ceased even the attempt to give shape to the life of Europe as a whole. The result is that the attempts to fashion Europe again have been made in our time by demonic churches, by the substitute religions of national socialism and communism.

The one hopeful element in this situation is precisely that all these roads have proved to be blind alleys.

Europe must now cease to be, or accept *metanoia* — a turning round. The spiritual forces which Europe received are exhausted. But that very moment of exhaustion may be the moment of rediscovery. The judgment has come — Europe is humiliated ; but that is the time when men may wake up.

That is then the unique thing about Europe today, that it is a civilisation at the end of its wits, a civilisation under judgment but therefore also a civilisation which in its life and death struggle may yet choose *life*. That makes it different from America which is not yet shaken to its foundations, or from Asia and Africa which are just beginning to enter into world-history.

And this is the bond of unity in Europe — this great common humiliation, this deadlock which calls for a new beginning, this terrible demonstration that the old has gone and that, if Europe is to live, there must be a new start. None of the old forces can do the trick. Roman Catholicism has thought too much in terms of the maintenance of its institutional life and has been too reactionary ; Protestantism too divided and too abstractly spiritual ; liberalism too superficial and too individualistic ; scientific rationalism too bloodless ; socialism too opportunistic ; nationalism too destructive. And the classes are equally played out — above all the bourgeoisie with its eternal pursuit of false securities but also the labour class with its understandable but nevertheless sterile resentments.

New foundations

That is why the time is ripe to work at *new* spiritual foundations. No mere patch-work can do what needs to be done. All movements of restoration, of clinging to the past are proving or will prove inadequate to the task. There are strong reactionary forces at work in Europe today, but none of them has anything like the imaginative conception of the European future which is required today. Only those who have drawn the

full consequences from the judgment of God will be able to speak to the condition of present-day Europe. The really important centres of life in Europe are therefore not the noisy ones and those which get the greatest publicity. It is not in conferences of the ministers of foreign affairs, not in the parliaments, not in the college of the cardinals and not in the synods of the Protestant Churches that one sees the new Europe taking shape. For in those places men speak and act *as if* they were still standing on a more or less solid foundation. It is rather where small groups of men and women realise that they are confronted by a great vacuum and begin to fill that vacuum. It is where attempts are made to break through the general deadlock in which all the so-called spiritual forces find themselves. Where socialists realise that it is not enough to give bread to the masses ; where Christians realise that it is not enough to give them moral advice or correct theology. It is where Roman or Protestant members of the clergy and the laity leave their well defended fortresses and enter into the vast no-man's land in which so many hungry souls are wandering about. It is where evangelism is not merely an attempt to acquaint outsiders with the peculiar forms of language and life of the Christian Churches but where it is an imaginative attempt to enter into the life of the modern pagan with a Gospel which is changeless in substance but constantly changing in its form of expression. It is where immobile congregations imprisoned in an antiquated bourgeois mentality and without any true sense of fellowship are transformed in living cells of infectious common Christian living. Europe is also built where the Churches of nations which have been torn apart find the bond of community in Christ stronger than all that stands between them. It is where Churches of differing confession stand together in order to make a common witness to their Lord. Thank God these things happen in Europe. But so far they are only small beginnings. And they may yet be smothered by the wild currents of nihilism and ideological

passion. In any case, our task is to find out where this work at the foundations is being done and to help as much as we can.

That is also the true *raison d'être* of reconstruction and inter-church aid in Europe. That is why our task is not merely a task of post-war rehabilitation. That is why the most important job is still before us. Our task must be understood in the great historical perspective of the spiritual regeneration of Europe as a whole. And that is also why our task must be performed *ecumenically* — for in this cause all Christian Churches are challenged *together*.

The third race

But how can we give more definite content to such a conception of Europe? What will be the concrete political and social substance with which this new Europe is to be filled?

Or to put it in the simple language of the man in the street: "We know what the reactionaries want; we know what the communists stand for. But we have no idea what you stand for?" This is a real challenge. It is indeed a tragedy that those spiritual forces in Europe which are on the lookout for new solutions and refuse to accept the alternative of order *or* justice *or* of freedom *or* community — have so far remained so abstract, inarticulate and therefore been unable to give political and social shape to their insights. But it must be remembered that the new, the as yet unrealised is always at a terrible disadvantage as over against the solid established systems. And what is more: in this present bi-dimensional world, in which we live under the daily suggestion that there are only two possibilities: the Eastern or the Western system — the voice of those who say: "*tertium datur*" — "there is a better way" — makes in the very nature of the case the impression of a voice crying in the wilderness. A dialectical attitude, an attitude of independence

in relation to the dominating ideologies seems like neutrality in a life and death struggle or as spectatorship when participation is the only virile attitude.

But it *need* not be. On the contrary : it *may* be the one and only positive attitude. It is a positive attitude, if it is based on the conviction that the two great ideologies now engaged in the great world-battle are *both* destined to pass away because neither is able to perform the task of the hour which is to give to the European masses that new sense of meaningful existence without which they cannot live. For life is *not* meaningful, if justice swallows freedom. Nor is it meaningful if a formal freedom makes justice illusory. Life is meaningful when in the terminology of the Amsterdam Assembly men live in a responsible society — a society where freedom and justice have been brought in to some harmony with each other.

The old Christians were called by their adversaries a *tertium genus* — a third race. For they broke through the accepted categories of the classical world and produced new forces which shaped a completely different world. In their time they seemed an ineffective "third force" which would not let itself be pigeon-holed by the current ideologies. It would seem that our generation of Christians has reason to remember that example. For thus we see that this particular third force is not a weak compromise and not a middle position between two opposing standpoints. The example of the "third race" in early Christian times shows us that in this respect we must not think in terms of space but in terms of time. For what characterised these early Christians ? Their peculiar sense of history, their conviction that the action of God in Christ had brought a completely new faith into the world and that the Church created by that action itself represented newness. In other words, the Christian force when it operates as it should is the force of *tomorrow*. It is the attitude which does not seek to return to the past or to adapt itself to the present but to point to the new day.

The responsibility of the Churches

Let nobody think that that means running away from the concrete tasks. On the contrary — it means precisely tackling these tasks realistically. In a world in which nations and parties act so very largely with their eyes on the propagandistic effect there is a crying need for men and women who conceive of political and social life simply in terms of the meeting of human needs. Berdiaev says that in the name of the proletarian ideology real, empirical workmen may be shot. And in the name of the ideology of free enterprise very real slavery may be organised. In a world where religion is relativised and politics absolutised there is a great need for men who stand on the foundation of absolute unshakable truth but are therefore able to see politics in the true proportions, that is as a sphere of very provisional and very temporary adjustments. The best thing that Europe can do politically is to “de-ideologise” itself and thus to help the rest of the world to get out of that great obsession about the eternal value of their political systems. Now the ideological passions represent really the modern substitute for the spiritual life. And so we cannot get rid of them unless the great vacuum which they try to fill is filled in another and better way. Thus we come back to the solemn responsibility of the Churches.

If it is true that Europe can only live, if it finds again its *own* way of life; if it is true that that way of life cannot be one of the old ways and cannot be the way of one of the powerful ideologies; if it is further true that we can only overcome the ideological temptation by the message of a God before Whom things fall into their proper places and politics becomes a humble service — then the Christian Church has indeed an awful responsibility in Europe. Then it is a matter of life and death whether it can get out of its terrible isolation from the life of the masses, whether it can escape from its self-made prison of conservatism and

self-centredness and whether it can perform its apostolate among the masses that have no shepherd. The remarkable movements of life within the European Churches — especially during the war — the return to the Bible as the source of new insight and life — the great stirrings in theology — are reasons for hope. But it is by no means the adequate answer of the Church to God's call in the present situation. For that call — as it comes to us through the disoriented, perplexed and often despairing masses around us — demands more. It demands not merely the renewal of the Church within its own realm but above all the outgoing of the Church to the world. We need today in Europe a movement of evangelism which in intensity, in readiness to sacrifice and above all in imaginative approach to the masses is comparable to the movement of foreign missions in the 19th century.

We dare not take it for granted that Europe has a future. We have no assurance that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We must count with the possibility that Europe's rôle is played out. But if that happens — God grant that it may not be owing to the failure of the Church in our day and generation. It may be that God sees Europe as the man who refused to use the talent which was given to him. In that case, Europe has no further task. But it may also be that God sees it as a prodigal son whom He would receive back. The Christian Church must hope and pray that the Father will once more receive this son, if after long wanderings he repents and returns home.

FROM A GERMAN TRAVEL DIARY

By 8.30 in the evening we arrived from Basle in the smoky and blacked-out station in Frankfurt. I discovered a sleeper was leaving for Bielefeld in an hour and by good luck (plus a little persuasion with the clerk) I got a compartment with an Indian who was a member of the Indian Military Mission in Germany. We started talking and eventually got into a very long and involved argument on the relative merits of Hinduism and Christianity, with a seasoning of Asian politics and communism thrown in for good measure. It brought back some very vivid memories of similar lunch-hour talks over plates of curried lamb and vegetables (which were almost inevitably cold before we got around to eating them) at the Indian Association Restaurant in Edinburgh. He said he would like to read the Bible but had once started with Genesis and became discouraged; I suggested that he might have better luck with the New Testament! This was my first "theological confrontation" in Germany! Later, during my travels I wondered if Hindu fatalism might not have considerable appeal in Germany if it were presented in a palatable modern form, or whether indeed its tenets were not already unconsciously held by numbers of Western "Christians", who had abandoned their hope for a spirit of quiet despair.

The training of student leaders

Early in the morning we arrived in Bielefeld; with twenty pfennigs lent me by a kind young German policeman I caught my tram and was soon in Bethel. There I was given a very warm welcome by Horst Bannach and the conference of student leaders — Vertrauensstudenten. Before I had a chance to catch my breath I was called upon in unison: "Please tell us a story." This rather astonished me, but by the time I got to Berlin I was prepared to

meet these "first-fruits" of the fellowship which has been realized between the German Studentengemeinde¹ and the British S.C.M. since the war! Looking back on my German visit I think the only thing I forgot to pack was a supply of "stories", a staple requisite — along with a towel, a ration-book and a Bible — at any British S.C.M. event. In almost every German group I saw I would meet one or two students who had been befriended as POW's in England by the S.C.M. and who had happy memories of the fellowship they had enjoyed at Westminster, or Swanwick, or Newcastle. It was obvious that many of these students were a real ecumenical leaven in the life of their Gemeinden.

This was a meeting of the new student leaders from the Western Zone Gemeinden meeting together in preparation for the coming year. I was very much impressed by the high calibre of the students — by their energy, by their liveliness and by their open-mindedness. The whole spirit of the conference was infectious and the good-humored banter at the meals was indicative of the general feeling of the group. I, for one, was struck by how similarly various national S.C.M. groups react and behave in some ways; for instance, at the "stunt" evening I enjoyed the show as much as anyone. It seems to me that S.C.M. humor is surprisingly the same the world over; several of the "acts", incidentally, were obviously of ecumenical origin! Fortunately, this good-humor penetrated even into the dark recesses of the business sessions.

At the same time there was an evident seriousness and a sense of devotion as they dealt with their responsibility toward their respective Gemeinden. One of the older leaders said it was the best group of students he had seen since the end of the war and he was very much encouraged by the meeting. On the other hand, their experience and viewpoint is limited in some respects. For instance, I could not help but feel that the time allotted to Bible Study was disproportionate in relation to the other parts of the program. To give the whole of every morning to Bible reading and discussion seems to encourage a kind of abstract and technical treatment often unrelated to practical and personal problems and experience. In the studies preparatory to the Lord's Supper the discussion seemed to take on flesh and blood; but even here I was rather shocked by

¹ Student community or congregation.

the intervention of a theological student, at the most delicate and personal part of the discussion, with a highly technical comparison of Greek texts.

It was this Holy Communion service in the local parish church, however, that seemed to me the real climax of the conference. At the end of the celebration conducted by Horst Bannach we were all called before the altar where we stood in a semi-circle and offered up free prayers of intercession and thanksgiving. I felt very deeply — as seldom before in an S.C.M. gathering — that we were truly a living community of Jesus Christ, bound together with ties that were above and beyond all human endeavor or even comprehension. The crucial part which the Communion plays in creating true Christian community, of which the strength of the German Studentengemeinde is an example, convinces me that we must re-examine the structure of many S.C.M.'s throughout the world to see whether many of their weaknesses and limitations do not have their origin in this lack.

A field for evangelism

I made a short visit to Detmold where the student pastors were having their meeting. An old friend, Rektor Dietzfelbinger, who was a guest at the Federation Chalet in Les Marécottes last summer, was in the chair. One of the recent developments they were discussing is the revival of the pre-Nazi social clubs in the universities. At the present they do not seem to be other than potentially dangerous, though a certain number of students have become so involved in their activities that they have dropped out of the Studentengemeinde for "lack of time". While there are various reasons for the rise of these clubs, one factor certainly seems to be the attempt to become a "member" of something and to escape loneliness and isolation; many of the clubs use the intimate form of "you" within their meetings, for instance. This may be a sign that the Studentengemeinde, in spite of its large membership and vigorous program, is still not touching as wide a group of students as it might be. This was borne out for me at an informal meeting in a home of some students who were not members of the Church, or of the Gemeinde; I was quite amazed at the general interest which an unexpected theological discussion raised among them and their real openness to a religious

appeal. But I was also struck by their hostility towards the Church as being outdated and inflexible and their apparent ignorance of the existence of the Studentengemeinde. It seems quite clear that there is a great field for intelligent evangelism still open in the universities; there is a danger, I am afraid, that the student pastors and student leaders are being misled by their present "prosperity" into closing their eyes to such a responsibility, and to the vast group still untouched by their work.

From Detmold I went to Minden to catch the "Air-Lift" to Berlin. When I arrived I asked when my plane would be leaving and was politely told that there were over eighty people ahead of me — mostly British Government officials — some of whom had been waiting for four days because of bad weather! Finally, after only a day's delay, with the kind assistance of the Religious Affairs Branch of the British Military Government and the help of some dollarchecks, I took my place on the canvas bench of an R.A.F. Dakota and was on my way, along with the bags of coal and potatoes, to Berlin; within an hour and a half we were rebuckling our safety belts and settling down on Gatow airport. It did not take long to see that most people were enduring their life in this "island in the Red Sea" nonchalantly; one of the lakes that we passed on our way into the city proper was filled with the white sails of small boats, apparently taking part in a regatta. Nevertheless, the constant stream of planes overhead and such things as the complete blackout at eleven o'clock each night never let you forget the peculiar position you were in. One day, while looking at the enormous Russian war memorial on the edge of the British sector, we suddenly found ourselves rubbing shoulders with a group of Russian soldiers who were apparently in a sight-seeing group; they looked like innocent young boys just off the farm but one could not suppress a strange unsettled feeling at their presence and what their uniform symbolized.

The problem of political responsibility

My first meetings in the Kirchliche Hochschule with pastors and student leaders from the Studentengemeinde of the East Zone further disabused me of the idea that everything was normal. Students who had done so mentioned that it was like going from Germany into Switzerland to go from the East to the West Zone

at the present time. I was especially interested in the frequency and intensity of their political discussions; this was in contrast to the groups in the West Zone, whose occasional political discussions seemed rather perfunctory and disinterested. For these students from the East Zone, however, it was clearly a "matter of life and death". As I sat listening to them, I felt greatly disturbed; it was not merely the pathos of their problem, but even more the tragedy of the German political heritage. A writer recently reviewing a book of essays by a distinguished historian commented: "There is one essay I miss... an explanation of the strange fact that German thought has triumphed so signally in politics and philosophy during the age of Germany's political and military extinction". This is a thorny and complicated issue which cannot be satisfactorily resolved with any pat formula; nevertheless, I believe that the German Church has some grave charges to answer in the case. As one of the students said to me after I had criticized the Studentengemeinde for not being politically responsible: "But we have no fathers in politics!" And so it is. To what tradition can they appeal or upon whose political experience and wisdom can they depend? Student after student seemed to have no real grasp of political activity which was other than passively accepting the occupational "paternalism" of the Western Zone or fighting a police state in the East. Many of them seem dangerously irresponsible about the necessity for Christian witness in the secular political and social life and surprisingly naive about even the most elementary techniques and procedures for political action. One might hope that the Christian communities themselves could provide an opportunity for experience in "political", communal action through the organization and management of their own affairs (as has been true in other countries); but even here the control tends to be surrendered to the "old hands" and the whole thing to become a "one-man show".

It was over this general problem that I became most disturbed while in Germany. Will the Christian community in Germany ever awake to the necessity of making clear its relationship with and its responsibility towards the total community of which it is a part? There is little indication now that many see the urgency of this task. In the Studentengemeinde, for instance, I feel that the great danger is that it will become a means of retreating from the ugly realities of the outside world, a "monastic" cell isolated and

sheltered by pious and abstract biblical speculations from the give and take of everyday social political exigencies. At the weekly meeting of one of the largest of the Gemeinden I heard an hour and half discussion on the text "Jesus Christ is Lord" in which not only was the discussion never adequately related to personal problems, but the question of the relevance of this text to the communal life of mankind was never even raised!

The dangers of isolation

In part one cause of this political ambiguity of the Christian community is their isolation from the outside world. That isolation has had other unfortunate repercussions as well. Some of those I met had an exaggerated idea of the peculiarity of their difficulties... "We lost many men during the war... Our cities were badly bombed... We lack food and suffer as a result of the war... etc." During a discussion of the terrible uncertainty — Unsicherheit — of life in the East Zone a Dutch visitor remarked: "Yes, it sounds just like what we suffered under our occupation." They were words which had a far more telling effect than he intended; for few Germans seem to be sensitive to the tragic fact that those most able to understand and appreciate their present difficulties are those who suffered under German occupation during the war. If it is mentioned that the destroyed buildings in Bonn remind one of the bombed areas in Liverpool, or that Great Britain has had stringent food rationing for many years, or that France has had grave reconstruction problems, the reaction is sometimes almost one of surprise to think that the war struck other lands beside Germany. This self-centeredness of some Germans, rising out of their isolation, has other disturbing potentialities. I sometimes wondered what sort of "mythology" will be built up regarding the war and post-war period if this isolation is not sufficiently broken through. One day while riding in a train from Köln to Hannover I got into a conversation with the railway conductor. He was telling me how he had lost his home in Aachen during the war and the great difficulty he had experienced since that time. Just before we pulled into the station he said: "Ja... der Krieg war nicht nötig." On the surface it is an innocuous platitude; but when one thinks of the Nazi propaganda on the subject and the confusing realignment of "allies" in the post-war

East and West conflict it has the makings of a dangerous "myth", and should not be left unchallenged.

One night in Berlin I attended a performance of a new play which has gained great popularity; it is called Der Teufels General and is the story of a German air-force general who became disillusioned with the Nazis and finally came into open conflict with them. Once again, it is the beginnings of a dangerous "myth" if it becomes widely believed that the German army generals were the "heroes" of the anti-Nazi resistance. I noticed that there was almost a breathless hush over the audience when a group of air-force officers in the play drank a toast to the Vaterland. Will the Church be able to temper this strange combination of political resignation and nationalistic mysticism in Germany? It would be a great contribution both for Germany and the whole of Western Europe if it could.

The pioneering rôle of the student community

It is a gratifying fact that the groups of the Studentengemeinde which I met seemed to be more aware than most of the dangers of their isolation and they again and again expressed their thankfulness for the few ecumenical contacts which they have already had and their fervent wish to enlarge and increase those wider contacts. The presence of Harry Daniel from India at the summer conference in Berlin last summer, for instance, has made a great impression all through the Studentengemeinde of the East Zone, even among those who were not actually at the conference. For this summer's conference they have expressed their wish that one or two students from West Africa might be able to come, and official invitations from the Kirchliche Hochschule have arrived in the Federation offices for that purpose. It is also gratifying to see that the Studentengemeinde is a dynamic element in church life. Some of the old S.C.M. members expressed a certain amount of "nostalgia" for the pioneering rôle which the S.C.M. traditionally played and in which the Studentengemeinde is somewhat limited by its stronger ecclesiastical bonds; one said he felt this nostalgia especially strongly after being in England for a time and seeing the British S.C.M. in action. Nevertheless, the youthful character of the Studentengemeinde insures the fact that it will tend to be a step ahead of general church life and thought; what even further insures its

pioneering rôle is its contact with the ecumenical movement. That fact places a special responsibility upon the Federation and more especially on individual members and groups of the Federation to establish and maintain these vital personal contacts, the life-blood of ecumenism.

There are other reasons why I am not despondent about the future of the Studentengemeinde in spite of the great difficulties which face it. A simple reason is that it has such a deep and vigorous spiritual life and such powerful potentialities. One could especially see this — or should I say “hear” it — in the singing of the groups. In a remarkable way they are “singing communities” and they express the fulness of their faith in magnificent and forceful musical terms. It is certainly the most personal expression of their religious life and perhaps the most attractive to the outsider. Another simple thing is that this deep spiritual life shows itself at its best, in an indomitable passion for evangelism. One of the most encouraging things which I heard during my whole stay in Germany was the comment of one of the student pastors from the East Zone that Christians must not be intimidated by their problems but rather see in them the opportunity for evangelism: “You must not look upon these strange figures in grey and green merely as those at whose hands you have suffered and whom you must fear; rather you must see them as fellow children of God, who, God willing, may hear from you for the first time the Good News of His Son.” It is this hope, in spite of all outward obstacles and contradictions, which puts the rival hopes of men — even the passionate hope of the marxist man — in their proper perspective and it is this hope which always qualifies one’s human tendency to despair in view of what is happening in Eastern Germany.

The promise of Easter

It was on Good Friday evening, as I sat at Templehof watching the great planes coming in out of the darkness, their landing lights catching the runway like great stilts, and then settling down to be unloaded. At last we were in our places in the luxurious “Skymaster” and with a roar were moving up and out over the lines of lights interlacing through Berlin. I could not help but feel the irony that the airplane had been both the “death and life” of this great city —

first, as part of this bombing squadrons which had reduced her to rubble and now as part of the "Air-Lift" which was sustaining her life. I felt a strange glow of pride at the tremendous power throbbing in the engines of our plane and at the incredible technical achievement which it and the "Air-Lift" itself symbolized. It was a sharp contrast from the shattered and stricken Berlin which we were leaving. Perhaps it symbolized for me the contradiction between God's gift to man of dominion over the whole earth and man's awful perversion of this gift and right. In a way the airplane meant to me the promise had not been an empty one, nor had it been entirely unrealized; but the jagged walls and brick heaps so near below were equally forceful reminders of man's denial of that destiny. Now it was Good Friday and soon it would be Easter. Here was the restoring and reclaiming of God's dominion over man and, correlatively, man's dominion over the earth. But the victory of Easter can only come after Good Friday and through the Cross. A visit to Germany today is a living commentary on that lesson.

KEITH BRIDSTON.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

News from Peiping

Extracts translated from the letter of a Y.M.C.A. student secretary

Dear Colleague :

March 10th, 1949.

We will begin with small things. Formerly, nobody dared to go out after 6 p. m. There was not a single light on the streets. If one should go out, he would often be searched or robbed. After liberation, all the street lights came on the first night and the curfew was lifted. That first evening, my wife and I went to see an opera called "Red Leaf River". It was staged by the People's Cultural Corps of the North China People's Government. The story is about how the rural people got emancipated. It was a combination of a play, an opera and "yang go" (field singing). We really saw the healthy, forward-looking, people's art. After the opera, on our way out, we noticed many young students, middle-aged women... rubbing their eyes with handkerchiefs and saying to each other that this was the first time they had seen something closely related to themselves : how the rural people under the feudalistic oppression are suffering and what it means for them "to turn the tables". On our way home, we saw small groups of students on Chang An Street who had also just come out of the opera. They were singing, running, laughing, and shouting ; they forgot the severity of the cold winds in winter nights. After a while, we saw trucks carrying singing workmen pass us. For the first time, I became deeply aware of the fact that we were truly freed and liberated. Students have sensed it all the more. When they walk, they also sing the "yang go". In Yenching, students sing the "yang go" during their morning exercises. When several hundred students do this together in the athletic field it will surely make you perspire in fifteen minutes...

Concerning the churches, there has been no change up to now and everything is as usual. Dr. T. C. Chao has discussed with the communists about the question of religious freedom. Their answer was that there will certainly be religious freedom and that this will also later be guaranteed in the Constitution. On the other hand, since it will be permitted to have freedom to believe in religion, it will also be permitted to have freedom to oppose religion. Each person may compete with the other in their own propaganda. Here the pastors held a three-day retreat to study the situation and to find out how to pay more attention to the practical work of social service. It is said that recently Dr. T. C. Chao has undergone a great change in his thought. He believes that the new situation which now confronts us is a judgment on the Chinese Churches. If the churches should continue to depend on the wealthy and influential people and not undertake any practical service toward men, moving only their lips to preach a lot of irrelevant things, they would soon be thrown overboard. But most of the pastors are not thinking along the same line, and their greatest concern is "how the pastors can get along after contributions from abroad are discontinued". The Y.M.C.A. in the past is in the same condition as that criticized by Dr. Chao. From now on, can we direct our eyes downward and merge ourselves with the masses. Perhaps, this will determine the future of the Y.M.C.A.

With regard to student work, the challenge we face is even greater. A Yenching girl student, who has been an earnest "inquirer" for several years and was originally preparing to be baptized during Easter, has made a trip to Tientsin after the liberation and was impressed by the morale and discipline of the Liberation Army. She was so moved that she said "Formerly I believed that man can only change from evil to good with the power of Christ. But Christians can only talk and do not act, now the 'Eighth Route' has truly done it. It is also not just one or two of them. The Liberation Army that I saw in my Tientsin home are all very nice. Isn't it more powerful than Christianity?" There is another Christian of the "Little Flock" type who has decided to leave his home to participate in a political work corps going South. Still another Christian student said, "Formerly, I treated the scientific truth as God but now

the scientific truth is itself and needs no longer to be God". In spite of all persuasion he has given up his Christian faith. There are many other such examples. It is really the most serious challenge. The problem is how to meet it and with what to meet it. The saddest thing is that so many of us are unwilling to recognize this problem or to recognize it wholly...

The treatment of Christian educational institutions is the same as that of other private schools. They fix their own tuition charges and then report to the Bureau of Education. Everything else is left to themselves. With regard to Christian hospitals, the treatment is the same as all other private hospitals. There is nothing special about it. This kind of freedom given to Christianity has really deepened its crisis. If it does not renew itself, it will die of itself. There are people who are blindly optimistic. They say that Christianity still prospers in Eastern Europe and it will be the same in China. Actually, this can hardly be true. In the new democratic countries in Southeast Europe, the capitalistic development is more advanced than in China (such as the industry in Czechoslovakia), and hence the middle and small bourgeois classes are relatively stronger. The social foundation of the Churches from the economic standpoint, is also stronger. Further, the Christian tradition in the different countries in Europe has lasted more than a thousand years and has therefore penetrated into all phases of life of all classes of people. Whereas in China, Christian missionaries came in large numbers only during the last hundred odd years after the Opium War. The Chinese Churches cannot compare with those in Europe either in organisation or in personnel. The future of the Church and the rise or fall of Christian institutions will be determined by the following four factors: 1) Whom do they unite with and whom do they serve? 2) Their own financial resources; 3) Through reform of internal personnel; 4) Policy of the Government...

Sincerely yours,

CHAO FO-SAN

Pax Romana Study Week

Catholic Action has increasingly become the framework within which the Catholic laity find their field of action. Therefore in January 1949, Pax Romana, the International Movement of Catholic Students, organized for the first time since the war an international Study Week entirely devoted to university Catholic Action. It was held at Mariastein, Switzerland, from January 2-7, 1949.

The following account consists mostly of extracts from the official report published by Pax Romana. The members of the Federation will doubtless be struck by the fact that very many of the problems discussed, and quite often the spirit in which they were approached, at Mariastein are most familiar to us, though at certain points there are rather different terms and theological implications.

The Study programme

The exact aims envisaged in organizing this meeting may be summed up as follows :

1. To bring together students and chaplains who are really active in the university apostolate — especially in the countries of Central and Western Europe — and to provide in this way for an exchange of concrete experiences which would be fruitful for all, but particularly for those who are in the initial stages of their apostolic work.
2. To find out in the course of discussion which practical problems are of particular urgency, and also in what way Pax Romana as such can best promote the work of the university apostolate and the solution of these problems.
3. To prepare the way for the formation of a Study Commission on university Catholic Action, which will collaborate with the General Secretariat in the study of Catholic Action problems and in the preparation of meetings, publications, study plans, etc. in this field.

In order better to concentrate on concrete problems, all purely theoretical discussions of the nature of Catholic Action had been expressly excluded from the programme, and this decision was, on the whole, respected. Moreover, if a certain difficulty was at times felt in discussion owing to the considerable differences in the degree of preparation and the experience of the various participants — think, for instance, of a “militant” of the French Jeunesse Etudiante Chrétienne in discussion with a recent convert from a country of a small Catholic minority! — work was facilitated by a clearly defined plan which led the discussions, if not to ready-made conclusions, at any rate to a clearer presentation of the problems involved.

University apostolate

The discussion on *Methods of the University Apostolate* was introduced by Rosemary Goldie of Australia.

The problems of the university milieu which we have been considering can be summed up under four headings :

- 1) Problems of the university as an institution : structural shortcomings — lack of community life — relations between professors and students — student representation, etc.
- 2) Material problems : food and lodging, etc. ; the necessity of working to earn a livelihood.
- 3) Problems connected with the intellectual content of university life : defects in the professional and general formation given by the university ; anti-Christian teaching.
- 4) Problems of the students' moral and spiritual life, including those arising from the student mentality.

How should Catholic Action set to work in the face of these problems ? We naturally presuppose that the Catholic Action “militant” has seen the problems and has felt responsible for solving them, that he has the necessary qualities for this apostolate and that he has the grace of God to help him carry it out.

1. The apostle of Catholic Action will not set about solving these problems alone. Or, even if he is alone, provided he is a true apostle, he will be himself already the “nucleus” of a future

cell, and it will not be long before he has gathered round him the little group of friends who will give the necessary complement of efficacy to his own work.

The team does not exist for itself, but as a means for the work of re-Christianisation to be done in the milieu ; like the apostle, it must get itself accepted by the milieu ; it must not, however, be an artificial group ; a natural team is bound together not only by a common ideal, but by real friendship.

Within the team, all are not leaders ; each has his own function — that is the strength of the team. But without true leaders nothing worth while will be accomplished. It is essential to win over the natural leaders of the milieu.

2. The team having been formed, the next step is to define more clearly the task to be undertaken. The means used will be the enquiry (which is not necessarily a ten-page questionnaire). The information will be gathered by personal contact in the milieu. The enquiry, at the same time as it clarifies the problems to be solved, forms the leaders, accustoming them to see what is around them and to have a sense of their own responsibility. After seeing, judge — with charity !

3. The next phase is action. The only rule which is of general application is not to try to do everything at once ! According to circumstances the action will take the form of collective services rendered to the university milieu ; of campaigns — short range action to create interest and overcome student “apathy” on a given point ; or again special negotiations, for instance with the university authorities.

The action to be taken can also be divided according to the four classes of problems mentioned above :

- a) Action concerned with the university as an institution : promoting contacts between students and professors, preparing the university elections, launching a campaign for a more genuine student representation, arranging a welcome for foreign students or an information service for freshmen, etc.
- b) Services to help students solve their material problems : renting rooms, organizing community lodgings, cheap meals, heated common rooms, holiday camps, sporting activities, etc. ; launching campaigns to create a social mentality, etc.

- c) Services of an intellectual nature : mimeographed lecture notes, libraries, reading rooms, lectures, cultural groups, vocational guidance, publications, meetings between graduates and undergraduates of the same faculty, etc.
- d) Services in favour of the students' spiritual life : organizing Masses, retreats, the Easter Communion, etc. ; helping the general Catholic group to fill its rôle as a Catholic community ; steps taken to counteract the influence of anti-Christian teachings.

It must, however, be remembered that services do not take the place of Catholic Action. Once they have been assured, the Catholic Action militant must be ready to leave them in the hands of others and himself pass on to new tasks with a dynamism which adapts itself to the ever-changing needs.

In the discussion a Belgian delegate stressed the rôle of the team as a "witness to the Church in the milieu", rôle which requires it to be a centre of intense Christian life. Services should not be organized by the Catholic Action group as such.

An Italian priest stated that the Catholic university community should work to Christianize the milieu, but also to form the Christian culture and Christian university community of tomorrow. It is important to promote a strictly intellectual apostolate on the national and international levels. The Catholic Action team must establish a tradition and create currents of thought. The team must, moreover, possess the human qualities of the apostle : simplicity, justice, humanity, etc.

A Frenchman insisted that within the team there must be an individual action also : prayer, Christian living, etc. The team must also be integrated into a wider community : the Catholic group, which for its part must be open and have a missionary spirit ; it is a cell of the Church and must be known as such. Within the wider community, it will be easier to ensure continuity and the recruitment of members and to establish a tradition.

The cell must be concerned with the same tasks as the Church herself. Material services, libraries, etc. must be organized by Christians as individuals and not by the apostolic team as such.

After the discussion on the training of members of university Catholic Action groups, Rudi Salat, a member of the secretariat,

in giving a summary of the discussion, pointed out that university Catholic Action which consists in re-Christianizing the university, i. e. in giving Christ to the university, presupposes three essential aspects in the formation of the student :

- he must learn to live the Christ-life ;
- he must have a realistic knowledge of the university ;
- he must know how to give Christ, and must therefore learn to employ the technical means of the apostolate.

It is, moreover, essential not to expect perfection from the outset — allowance must be made for a few mistakes if people are to learn — and also to form the apostles in such a way that they will not become discouraged. They must be warned that difficulties will surely come.

Spiritual life

The discussion on *Spiritual Life as a Prerequisite Condition of all Apostolate* was introduced by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Emilio Guano who concluded by pointing out that it is from the liturgy — and especially from the Mass — that the apostle derives his mission, drawing near to the priest, to the bishop, to the Church, to Christ. The liturgy is in itself a great action for the good of mankind, at the same time as for the glory of God. In it the aim of Catholic Action is achieved : to bring men to God, their Father through Christ, their Brother.

The discussion dealt mainly with the possibility of requiring a “minimum programme of spiritual life” from Catholic Action militants and with the expediency of keeping a certain check, at least on outward behaviour.

A German delegate stressed the importance of personal asceticism as an indispensable condition of all apostolate.

An Austrian priest pointed out that there has to be an organic development in the supernatural life. We must begin by small things, by the signs of our Faith. The man of Catholic Action must have a sense of the liturgy ; he should also know how much he himself can do in liturgical life (how to baptize, etc.).

An Australian spoke 1) of the success of an experiment which was made in introducing university students to a simplified study of ascetical theology and especially in giving them a better

understanding of what Grace is and of what we can do to increase it in our souls ; 2) of the advantages of recommending lay people to belong to one of the Third Orders, so as to promote and give a more definite form to their spiritual life.

A French delegate stressed three points : 1) The stimulus which external activity can give to one's inner life. To carry out his work of re-Christianization, the militant must share the spiritual dispositions of his age and the noble aspirations of his milieu — its desire for unity, peace, etc. ; in the suffering of his milieu he must see the suffering Christ. 2) We need a true mystical conception of the Church, as against other mysticisms in which force has taken the place of love. 3) We need also an eschatology — faith in a redeemed humanity of which we ourselves are an integral part ; we need hope in a new world and a charity which will not stop short at scandal and revolution.

Mgr. Guano replied to various points of the discussion :

- 1) It is not easy to define a general method for spiritual formation, we must not, however, be afraid of giving too much — sometimes we give too little and there are those who remain unsatisfied.
- 2) Theology is sometimes presented in too “seminaristic” a fashion ; at times it is better to start from concrete problems and pass from them to dogma. Students should also be introduced to the sources of Revelation : the Gospels, the Fathers of the Church, the Old Testament.
- 3) It is good to accustom students in the Catholic Action groups to speaking about the spiritual life — about mediation, mortification, etc. — under the direction of the priest. If the “confession of faults” is practised, it should be done with the greatest discretion and with the necessary reserve ; some things we say only to God.
- 4) Opportunities can be found for spiritual formation in the life of the cell : by drawing attention to aspects of the spiritual life which are in relation to Catholic Action, by circulating books, etc.
- 5) We should not ask for a minimum of pious practices, but for a maximum of self-giving !

The Czech delegate stressed the importance of private meditation, of retreats and recollection days and of the rôle of the spiritual director. He remarked on the fact that we too often discuss the Gospels rather than meditate on them — we must be on our guard against “humanising” Christ! Finally, he pointed out the formative value of action — Catholic Action should be a source of spiritual life.

The Bible at Work in a French Foyer

1. *Ours is a Biblical Witness*

The great underlying motivation of our *witness* is based upon the biblical *evangelical* statement in John’s Gospel: The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. It is to that statement (and all it implies) that we would bear witness through our living presence by *dwelling* among the people here.

In order then to make known our witness we take inspiration, guidance, conduct, comfort, etc. from the Word of God first of all for our motivation, and consequently for our own nourishment through daily morning worship periods around the Bible. From the very start it has been possible through the “open-house” way of living here to associate regularly one or more persons with us for this informal meeting. More, we believe, has been accomplished by this quasi-accidental encounter with the Bible than can be told.

2. We have determined to force nothing upon the people of our Foyer which they do not understand, or which has no meaning to them. For instance, when we bring a biblical passage in connection with the daily life of the some eighty-five old people that gather every Wednesday, we do not pray before them, feeling that they have not understood the meaning of prayer in group where one person leads.

3. Another point which needs to be stressed is that due to the at times social aspect of our work, we endeavour never to give

the impression that we are "buying" people. We have never urged anyone to remain for Bible study because we had given them a pair of shoes!

4. It was not until after several months, presence in the Foyer that we announced on the blackboard that soon there would be Bible study. They questioned us what that was, *la biblique*. Finally the day came when we announced: *Demain Etude Biblique!* (Bible Study Tomorrow).

These Bible studies, especially with the young workers, would perhaps horrify a number of people trained from their youth on up to place themselves (at times unnaturally) in reverence and awe before the Word of God. To begin with they were in dirty work clothes, some kept their berets on their heads, as they even do at home. We did not insist. That was three years ago this very month (March 1946). Now they no longer keep on the beret!

Naturally, we kept very much to the New Testament, though at times, in preparation for Easter or Christmas, we would read messianic prophecies in order to trace the Christological line (*Dessein de Dieu* type of thing!). In order to make for continuity the teaching-explanation is done in cycles in order to help them remember what was said before. These cycles run for about three or four months. Much use is made of the Church year which helps us bring the studies into their lives because they all participate in festivities of which they know not the meaning. At times they sit around the table, at times around the fire, at times in my room on the bed. Amazing sight to see their rough, soiled, hardened hands, though their ages are only 15-20, hold the Testaments and turn the small pages. They read, each taking turn, though it means loud laughter at times when they stumble over words, or come across something which to their uninhibited minds seems simply *fou* (nonsense), and so they say it.

Once the passage read, an explanation to the point is given, bringing in facts and circumstances from their own life which we have had to learn to know intimately — and which we must still learn to know better. Then very often, though not always, there comes comment, and questions, but not always to the point. This means that preparation for such a Bible study

is not what is gotten out of books an hour before, but that which has been learned through life with them, and the Spirit Who in that hour tells us what to say. The most unexpected questions will come up, and a careless brushing aside of some issue may be taken for an escape.

It is always our purpose during each cycle to give them a knowledge of the simplest content of the heart of the Gospel. No commitment as such is asked during these encounters, but there have been times when a heavy silence suddenly fell over the small group. The Spirit of God was at work. Then, in order to break this, I myself at times have suddenly closed the Bible to change to some other topic. It would have been too cruel to go on. They would not have been able to stand the spiritual tension.

These Bible studies are, as you can understand, the best preparation for the personal conversation which, in final analysis, we believe is the highest witness. In the Bible study we can observe and watch for the "ripe" moment.

Not all these young people continue. After one or more cycles they may drop out. This we regret, but we do not urge them back, for the hardest Bible studies to conduct are those where several of the persons present are there, not of their own will, but for some other reason, or merely to please a buddy, or because they do not care to go home. (The typical young people's Bible study, dare I say, where they remain because the leader might not think well of them.) We have nothing more of that now. We have pleaded with them not to remain if they did not sincerely *want* to. It took some time, but they have learned. It means that at times there are only three to six of us. But after such a cycle (when we can dig deeper) we again cast the net out widely, begin a new series with a large attendance. It is a problem at times to choose between numbers or quality. Humbly we dare say that these Bible studies with "our boys" are a refreshing experience to any Christian immunized against routine Bible studies.

5. Though we must refrain at this time from telling about the work among the children, and the adult Bible class, we would say one word about Bible distribution. There is no whole-sale distribution of Bibles at the Foyer. (Incidentally we do no

have a Bible lying around loosely on the table either since we discovered that a few had come upon passages interesting enough to call them to the attention of others amid laughter, which we did not fear, but for which especially the girls in the team were not always prepared to give on-the-spot explanations! This, however, does not mean that we hide the Bible or certain passages from them.)

Pursuing the line of religion-with-meaning-and-content we present New Testaments and Bibles as gifts (very special gifts) to chosen young people at certain times in their friendship development toward us. In our young couples' club a Bible was presented at the wedding anniversary of each couple. And just the other week a Bible was solemnly presented to a couple married fifty years, just a few days before they went to the city hall to receive a special gift from the city. Somehow we believe that these people know that the Bible given to them by the *Equipe Cimade* was the most precious thing they got. Perhaps not because of what they read in it, but because they know that our very being there, and all we mean to them somehow, though they may not understand, is the result of that Book. Moreover, our ultimate purpose is that the two fine grandsons, 13 and 17, living with these old folk will find their way to its Message.

In our Foyer the Bible is not flung at people, but few there are who can know us long without having its Message touch them.

RAY W. TEEUWISSEN

Foyer CIMADE

Coudekerque-Branche, Nord, France

BOOK REVIEW

BISHOP BRENT — CRUSADER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY, A. C. Zabriskie, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, \$3.75.

“Could anything good come out of Newcastle, Ontario?” Such is the question which continually recurred as the reviewer read Dean Zabriskie’s excellent account of Bishop Brent’s life.

If you had been God in 1862 and had decided to create and train a man capable of conceiving a vision of the Church in its wholeness transcending all national, cultural and theological divisions, where would you have begun? Surely, the reasonable thing would be to make a start in a highly cultured family in some European centre where variegated patterns of cultural, racial and confessional experiences intertwined. Such a background would give your chosen one a chance to see unity in diversity, to achieve skill in languages, and to develop those polished diplomatic habits which are essential for one destined to be the Chairman of the first Faith and Order Conference. Certainly you would not have thought of Ontario, with its three or four little pretences at cities, consisting mostly of bush and water, inhabited chiefly by fish, deer and bears and completely devoid of “culture”. But if for no reason at all you did decide on Ontario, then Newcastle would doubtless do as well as anywhere else. There was little choice in 1862! But once you had decided on this little hamlet you would have seen how fantastic the whole idea was and certainly would have turned back. You might expect to get some good strawberries from Newcastle, but to bring from it a future Bishop of the world, the Bishop who was to be everybody’s Bishop — impossible!

But this is what the real God actually did — the God who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the great mystery of Bishop Brent’s life. It is the mystery of God’s choosing and calling of individuals.

Once this great mystery is accepted there is nothing strange in Charles Brent's life. After he had graduated from Trinity College, Toronto, and been ordained a deacon of the Church of England, it was not an accident that there was no vacancy for him in Canada so that he had to migrate to New York, for only so could he become a citizen of two countries and through living a dual nationality learn to transcend the confines of nationalism. It was not an accident that he had the argument over the candlesticks with his Bishop. Without that he would not have begun to search into the meaning of ritual in the Church. Without that he would have passed a quiet, happy and fruitful ministry unknown beyond the borders of Western New York. It was not an accident which took him as the first Missionary Bishop to the Philippine Islands. How else could he have come to the affirmation: "We missionaries have moments of deep depression when the consciousness sweeps over us that it is little short of absurd to try to bring into the Church of Christ the great nations of the Far East unless we can present an undivided front. For purely practical reasons we... feel the necessity of the Church's realization of unity. It must be either that or a failure in our vocation."

Brent was deeply affected by the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, 1910, which was really the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. In his own words: "I was converted. I learned that something was working that was not of man in the conference; that the Spirit of God... was preparing a new era in the history of Christianity." After the conference Bishop Brent returned to the U.S.A. to attend the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. "He records in his diary that at the early Eucharist on the opening day of the convention there came upon him vividly a conviction that a world conference should be convened to consider matters of faith and order. The great event in the history of Christendom with which his name will be indissolubly associated forever was thus born in prayer; and every step the Bishop took in promoting it was begun and ended in prayer. It might be said literally that he prayed the conference into existence." It took seventeen years of prayer and work before the first conference on Faith and Order convened at Lausanne in 1927, but then, according to William Temple,

his position as the pivotal person of the conference was plain, and his quiet, firm and often humorous control of the discussion was most effective.

In presenting the life of Bishop Brent, Dean Zabriskie has written a most enthralling and convincing account of the origins and meaning of the Ecumenical Movement. This was inevitable since the Church and its unity were of the very substance of Brent's being. When he thought of the Church, Brent "envisioned a Great Society of God's children and servants through whose corporate life He would carry on his saving and reconciling work on earth. This Great Society, basing itself on God's revelation recorded in the Bible, would stand above individuals, nations, races, cultures, judging them all by the standards of its Master and serving them all in His spirit. It would meet the needs of individuals and groups by giving them a faith by which to live and a goal for which to work. The faith was that ultimate reality is omnipotent love, whose unique Revealer and Agent is Jesus Christ; the goal was the furtherance of God's rule on the earth. By providing these, the Church would elicit men's fullest capacities, unify their personalities, direct their energies into creative channels, enable them to achieve harmonious and fruitful relation with other people and lay hold on their heritage as sons of God. By giving this faith and this goal it would provide the motive for all the scientific, artistic, literary, economic, and social activities necessary to human welfare, and would integrate them. It would be God's redemptive and fulfilling agency. The chief bond by which this Great Society would be held together was loyalty to the Lord Christ and the God whom he revealed."

This is clearly a book which all members of the Federation should read.

A. J. C.

YOUNG LAYMEN — YOUNG CHURCH. By John Oliver Nelson.
Association Press, New York. \$1.75.

This is a somewhat difficult book to assess. Its subtitle is "A Summons to Young Laymen in the Mid-Twentieth Century" and it sets out to give an essentially popular and lively account

of the new experiments which are being tried in the field of laymen's work in the United States and it certainly succeeds in making these sound both exciting and worth while. There is good reason for thinking that the churches of today are likely to stand or to fall by the use that they make of their laymen and any effort to make this known and to show the possibilities of such work is to be applauded. Nevertheless, one may be forgiven for wondering whether the work is either so easy or so wonderful as the author suggests. The book is written in a rather breathless style which leaves the reader with the impression that it is all as simple and as thrilling as a cold plunge if only people will make the initial effort. This is not so. There are a great many difficulties and problems and this branch of the Church's work, just as much as any other, can be dreary and frustrating as well as utterly exciting and no person should be encouraged to undertake it without this warning. This is just the error which has led to so many disillusioned missionaries, and it is worth considering that it is an error which Our Lord was very careful never to make. Another weakness of the book is its tendency to be over-enthusiastic about the present and to apply derogatory adjectives to the past. Thus, on page 26, the author speaks of a "new lay ministry" which is making Christianity go deeper, further and faster than ever before". Such exaggerations are a pity since they weaken the picture. The new work among the laity is important and it is exciting, but it has not turned the world upside down yet.

A. D. BALY.